DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 603 CE 044 712

AUTHOR	Roden, David
TITLE	Community Involvement in Transportation Planning. Technical Report Series 37.
INSTITUTION	North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington.
SPONS AGENCY	Federal Aviation Administration (DOT), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	DOT-1-85-32
PUB DATE	May 84
NOTE	101p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adults; *Citizen Participation; Community Coordination; *Community Involvement; *Community Planning; Land Use; *Leadership Qualities; Meetings; *Transportation; Urban Planning

ABSTRACT

This paper is designed to assist city staffs and transportation agencies in organizing effective community involvement programs. The role of nontechnical information in the decision making process is addressed first, to help professional engineers and planners consider its importance in planning and implementation. In a chapter on value clarification, leadership skills for group meetings are described. The paper also outlines a process for developing an actual community involvement plan. Techniques discussed include publicity and information distribution, public meetings, advisory groups, flow of information to and from the public, conflict management, and relationship building. Work sheets and checklists are included as aids in this process. A rational planning model for implementation is described. Finally, an extensive list of involvement techniques is presented. These techniques are discussed individually so that planners can choose those best suited to the planning situation. A public meeting checklist is appended. (Author/KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CE

ED271603

U.S. Department of Transportation

Community Involvement in Transportation Planning

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

May 1984

CE044712

Community Involvement in Transportation Planning

Technical Report Series
37

North Central Texas Council of Governments
P. O. Drawer COG Arlington, Texas 76005-5888

The North Central Texas Council of Governments

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is a voluntary association of cities, counties, school districts and special districts within the sixteen-county North Central Texas region - established in January 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development.

The Council of Governments is an organization of, by, and for local governments. Its purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments - and to help them recognize regional opportunities, resolve regional problems, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint regional decisions - as well as to develop the means to assist in the implementation of those decisions.

North Central Texas is a sixteen-county metropolitan region centered around Dallas and Fort Worth. It has a population of 3.6 million and an area of 12,627 square miles. NCTCOG currently has 194 member governments. The membership includes 16 counties, 144 municipalities, 20 independent school districts, and 14 special purpose districts.

NCTCOG's Department of Transportation and Energy

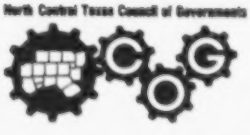
Since 1974 NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation for the Dallas-Fort Worth area. NCTCOG's Department of Transportation and Energy is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation. The Department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which compose the MPO policy-making structure. In addition the Department provides technical assistance to the local governments of North Central Texas in planning, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions.

William J. Pitstick
Executive Director

North Central Texas Council
of Governments
P.O. Drawer COG
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888
(817) 461-3300

Gordon A. Shunk
Director of Transportation
and Energy

The NCTCOG offices are located in Arlington in the Centerpoint Two Office Building, 616 Six Flags Drive. Take Hwy. 360 exit off I-30 (turnpike) and proceed .5 mile southwest on Six Flags Drive.



The preparation of this document was financed in part by the Federal Aviation Administration.

May 1984

Abstract

TITLE: Community Involvement in Transportation Planning

AUTHORS: David Roden
Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: A workbook to assist professional engineers and planners in the art of developing effective community involvement programs.

NUMBER OF PAGES: 77

ABSTRACT: This paper is designed to assist city staffs and transportation agencies in organizing effective community involvement programs. The role of nontechnical information in the decision-making process is addressed first, to help professional engineers and planners consider its importance in planning and implementation. Leadership skills for group meetings are described. The paper also outlines a process for developing an actual community involvement plan. Work sheets and checklists are included as aids in this process. Finally, an extensive list of involvement techniques is presented. These techniques are discussed individually so that planners can choose those best suited to the planning situation.

Acknowledgements

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is especially appreciative of the Federal Aviation Administration for its sponsorship of community involvement seminars. Special thanks are extended to Bill Wiedman of SYNERGY, whose leadership inspired much of this paper.

Table of Contents

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	I- 1
II.	THE BASICS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	II- 1
III.	VALUE CLARIFICATION	III- 1
IV.	ORGANIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES	IV- 1
V.	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES	V- 1
	The Community Involvement Plan	V- 1
	Involvement of Specific Publics	V- 5
	Publicity and Information Distribution	V- 5
	Public Meetings	V- 7
	Advisory Groups	V-12
	Involvement for Special Objectives	V-13
	Information to the Public	V-14
	Information from the Public	V-16
	Conflict Management	V-20
	Decision Credibility and Relationship Building	V-24
VI.	THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	VI- 1
VII.	CONCLUSION	VII- 1

APPENDIX A: Public Meeting Checklist

REFERENCES

List of Figures

Figure		Page
1	Community Involvement Action Plan	II- 2
2	Decision Responsibility	II- 3
3	Traditional Power Model	III- 2
4	Public Decision Model	III- 4
5	Team-Building Model	III- 6
6	Emotional Development	III-11
7	Skill Development Process	III-15
8	Categories of Public Response	IV- 6
9	Community Involvement Plan.	V- 4
10	Rational Planning Model	VI- 2

List of Tables

Table		Page
1	Community Involvement Techniques	V-27

Executive Summary

The community involvement process is intended to include the public in those decisions that would grant benefits to some and assess costs to others. The technical and economic feasibility of a plan remains the responsibility of professional staffs. The safety, environmental, political, social and other value-laden decisions belong to the publics affected by the action. With public participation in the development of the plan, hostile responses are less likely to occur and the planners are given a better opportunity to account for the value-laden questions in their technical analysis.

Community involvement is, therefore, recommended whenever public acceptance and understanding of an action or decision is required. Community involvement becomes the process of bringing together all of the people who can contribute to a solution in a consultative decision-making process that minimizes the environmental and social problems arising from the action. The fundamental justification for community involvement is the premise that people have a right to participate in the decisions that affect them.

A successful community involvement program can be summarized as follows:

1. A representative cross section of the general public has participated in the decision-making process.

2. The concerns of the general public have been expressed.

3. The agency has effectively communicated technical information to the public.

4. The public is satisfied with the responsiveness of the agency to the wishes of the community.

5. The credibility of the decision-making process has been established.

Community involvement programs will inevitably be dealing with a relatively small number of highly motivated and affected individuals. The agency's obligation to the broader public can best be served by:

1. Informing as broad a segment of the community as possible of the stake they may have in the issue under study.

2. Making it clear how citizens can participate in the study, and how their participation will influence the outcome.

3. Systematically targeting various publics in the community involvement program to ensure that the active minority is representative -- in terms of values and interests -- of the broader majority.

Publicity and information distribution techniques are the best way to reach the broadest possible public. The principal uses of these techniques are to provide information to the public about the action or the decision, to present opportunities for involvement, to stimulate public interest, and to establish credibility for the process. Many of these techniques involve the cooperation of the media. The importance of a credible relationship with the media cannot be overemphasized.

Publicity and information distribution techniques include press releases, public service messages, news coverage, feature stories and columns, editorials and letters to the editor, paid advertisements, television and radio appearances, displays and exhibits, newspaper inserts, brochures, mailed notices, and hand bills. Some additional techniques include field offices, hot lines, contests and events, surveys and questionnaires, presentations and speaking engagements, technical assistance to public groups, and employing local citizens and citizen advocates.

The public meeting is by far the most widely used and publicly accepted form of community involvement. It is also vastly overused and is generally boring, frustrating, and time wasting. The group meetings that are most effective include large group/small group meetings, workshops, coffee/kitchen meetings, neighborhood advisory groups, and nominal groups.

The relationship between the agency and the public is an accurate indicator of the effectiveness of the community involvement program. Good relationships add to the productivity of the involvement effort and the credibility of the decision-making process. The objective of all community involvement efforts should be to facilitate open, responsive, and committed citizen participation in the planning process.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Transportation planning is a process by which the needs of people and goods to be physically moved from one place to another are defined and evaluated at the present and projected for the future. In many cases the planning involves technical relationships of basic physical principles. The analysis of how the displacement can be done and what it will cost to do so is generally within the realm of engineering principles. The issues are, however, much more complex.

The impacts of transportation services affect people of diverse value systems in a wide variety of ways. The choices of living and working environments, recreation, and social interaction are highly dependent on the assumptions of transportation services. To disrupt these assumptions about the quality or quantity of transportation available to any given individual is to create a conflict in the organizational stability of that person's life. The person must adjust to or reject the change. Adjusting to this change may mean the reevaluation of not only a complex interrelationship of time, space, and institutional arrangements--but also interpersonal relationships as well.

In the first half of this century, the transportation profession was able to provide a level of service compatible with this country's emerging affluence. The system provided many cost and time saving features which revolutionized the structure of society. The increase in speed, the economies of scale, the accessibility to space, and the personal freedom and power that the transportation system provided outweighed the potential disutilities of the improvements. The general desire of the country was for more and bigger highways and airports,

faster and more comfortable automobiles and airplanes, and larger and more powerful trucks, locomotives, and ships. The government and private enterprise responded. The problems were capacity, speed, and power; the solutions were to build new and better facilities and vehicles.

The benefits of this growth were realized in a higher standard of living, a thriving economy, and a greater freedom of movement. People could now afford to live in a private world and work in a teeming metropolis. Businesses could develop with greater independence in their transportation decisions and, in the process, enjoy greater economies of scale, location, and property value. The amenities of a residential environment, such as good schools, open space, and quiet, safe, and homogeneous neighborhoods, became more significant factors in the locational decisions of the middle class family and the business community.

After several years of progressive federal programs in transportation and other areas, the benefits began to lose their luster. People became aware of the negative environmental and social impacts of these programs. Special-interest groups or other self-interested publics called attention to the increased inequities in the value of federal programs. The result has been an increase in federal regulations requiring environmental impact assessments and documented public involvement in the planning process. This has come about not because engineers and planners have been belligerent in developing transportation facilities; it is merely that they should have been more sensitive to the values of the people affected by their work.

Such transportation issues as highway and airway congestion, the threatened demise of mass transit and the railroad system, and the inflated costs of labor and capital improvements are compounded by many other problems in urban areas.

The pollution of water, air, and land; the excess of noise and visual blight; and the uncertain availability of energy and of other resources have had considerable impact on transportation investments. In addition, the costs of providing such urban services as sewers, police and fire protection, and recreational and cultural facilities compete with the transportation system for limited capital resources. Concerns about the decline of urban school systems, inner-city residential areas, and central business districts, as well as the general level of public safety, are all tied into transportation problems in very real ways.

The community involvement process is intended to include the public in those decisions that would grant benefits to some and assess costs to others. It is not intended to belittle the role of the professional in evaluating cause-and-effect relationships as to the technical or economic feasibility of an action. It means instead that the safety, environmental, political, social, and other value-laden decisions about any public program must consider concerns of the publics affected by the action. This concept assumes that with regard to value-laden decisions the judgments made by professionals are no more credible than those judgments made by the publics involved. The fundamental beliefs, attitudes and policies of professionals are not necessarily an accurate representation of the "common good." Objectivity is never complete and, for the most part, not important in evaluating the complex interrelationships of public needs.

If the subjectivity of the project is ignored, hostile public reaction could force conciliation that negates or damages the technical validity of the work. On the other hand, through public participation in project development, the public is less likely to form hostile responses and the engineers are given a

better opportunity to account for the value-laden questions in their technical analysis. Therefore, although attempting to resolve significant issues through the community involvement process will increase the time and expense of the planning process, it will greatly improve the likelihood that a program will emerge that successfully meets the expressed and anticipated needs of the public.

This paper will highlight some of the basic principles of the community involvement process in transportation planning. It will provide specific techniques for involving the public, designing meetings, and dealing with conflicts. It will also suggest ways of organizing community resources to effectively improve the implementation process. In general, the paper is intended as a resource for engineers and planners to help prevent the problems that frequently arise when planning is isolated to the office and not made a part of the public debate about the critical issues that affect people's lives.

CHAPTER II

THE BASICS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

"Community involvement is recommended whenever public acceptance and understanding of an action or decision is required."[1] The extent of a community involvement program is, however, considerably variable and highly dependent on the specific situation. This chapter will focus on the basic concepts that will assist in evaluating the extent of community involvement that might be required for any particular action. Since both community involvement and the consequences of inadequate community involvement are expensive ventures, it is appropriate to match the community involvement program with the importance of the issue.

To begin the process of designing a community involvement program, a simple action plan can be helpful. The action plan is outlined in Figure 1. It first involves a rather detailed definition of the program or action and the stages or steps that will be undertaken to achieve the product. One of the critical assumptions of community involvement is that the process occurs simultaneously with the planning or technical work. This means that the external environment and the values of others are considered during the technical analysis. As Figure 2 depicts, the final decision involves many different types of inputs. Some of these inputs can be evaluated with technical expertise. Others are principally political in nature. Community involvement becomes the process of bringing together all of the people who can contribute to a solution in a consultative decision-making process that minimizes the environmental and social problems arising from the action.[2]

FIGURE 1

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN

WHAT IS THE PRODUCT OF THIS PROGRAM OR ACTION?

WHAT ARE THE STAGES OR STEPS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS THAT WILL BE USED?

IS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT NEEDED?

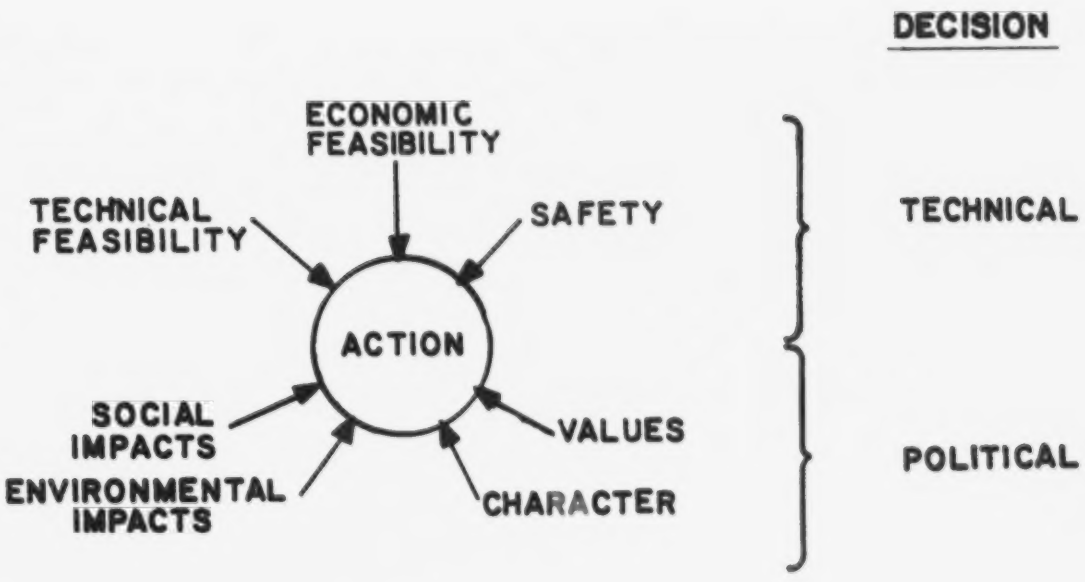
WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM BE EVALUATED?

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN FOR EACH STAGE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS.

FIGURE 2

DECISION RESPONSIBILITY



Once a product is defined, the next logical step is to determine if community involvement will be needed. The fundamental justification for community involvement is the premise that people have a right to participate in the decisions that affect them.[3] If professionals attempt to circumvent this right or simply forget to consult the public, the credibility of the outcome will be lost. The question still remains, when is community involvement needed? As a rule this is dependent on a complexity of issues. However, there are several general categories of actions that are particularly appropriate for community involvement programs. Community involvement is needed for any action that --

- legally requires such a program
- has important social, economic, or environmental impacts
- affects future development goals, values, or needs in a major way
- affects the policy-making process or laws
- involves the acquisition of land or the restriction of land use
- eliminates or increases service significantly
- has potential political implications for alternative courses of action

The fact that community involvement is needed does not determine the extent of the community involvement program. In some instances one action may require a massive program combining many techniques. In others the program may be very simple. The extent of the community involvement program can be estimated by answering the following questions:

1. Does the history of the problem, issue, or facility suggest a high level of public involvement or frustration?
2. Have other projects or actions of a similar nature generated public controversy?

3. Are there considerable political or policy implications for various decision-making bodies or levels of government?
4. Are the technically feasible solutions generally acceptable to all of the publics who have a vested interest in the action?
5. Is the fiscal or economic feasibility of the action within the tolerable limits of the tax-paying public?
6. Does the agency have a credible image with the public?
7. Is there significant information critical to the evaluation of the action that needs to be provided to or acquired from the general public in order to successfully implement the action?
8. Are there any general impressions or intuitions that suggest that community involvement may be a major issue in this instance?

Once the basic estimate of the need for community involvement is established, a realistic evaluation of the goals and objectives of the community involvement program can be made. This suggests a very important principle of community involvement: "Format Follows Function."[4] In other words, the techniques selected for involving the public must serve the purpose of the program. Unless a particular technique is required by law, no activity is justified outside of the specific purpose of achieving some goal or objective of the community involvement program. If the activity is perfunctory -- that is, without the commitment and awareness of how the community's input will benefit the study -- the program is a waste of time and money. It may also mislead the public and consequently jeopardize the project.

There are four major categories of objectives for community involvement programs:

1. Provide information to the public

2. Gather information from the public

3. Manage conflicts

4. Establish the credibility of the decision-making process.[5]

The first two objectives recognize the rights of the public to take part in the decision-making process. When information is not exchanged, people become resentful and suspicious. An adversary relationship will tend to develop that makes it increasingly difficult to resolve conflicts.[6] The failure to exchange information in the planning stages of a study will likely emerge as a considerable issue during the implementation of the plan.

Conflict management may be needed to achieve general agreement or support for the proposed action or to improve the potential for funding.[7] In many instances the conflict is not with the agency or the proposed action but instead is among interest groups concerned about specific consequences of alternative actions. The community involvement program may need to work with these particular concerns to improve communication and strive for a mutual understanding.

Establishing credibility is an important objective of almost all transportation projects. Disagreement will always exist, but if the public believes that the decision was arrived at in a fair and equitable manner, the legitimacy of the planning process is maintained. This can occur only if the process is sufficiently open and visible, and equal access has been provided to all individuals and groups.[8]

The final consideration preliminary to actual development of a community involvement plan is the choice of mechanism to evaluate the program's performance in achieving the objectives. Unlike performance measures for technical

analysis, the evaluation criteria for community involvement can rarely be quantitative. Developing qualitative measures may be particularly difficult for engineering and planning professionals. Notwithstanding, it is an important exercise in value clarification.

Several categories of evaluation criteria are discussed here. They can be summarized as follows:

1. A representative cross section of the general public has participated in the decision-making process.
2. The concerns of the general public have been expressed.
3. The agency has effectively communicated technical information to the public.
4. The public is satisfied with the responsiveness of the agency to the wishes of the community.
5. The credibility of the decision-making process has been established.

One frequent pitfall to an otherwise successful community involvement program is the assumption that the "vocal minority" does not represent the wishes of the general public, i.e., the "silent majority." Professionals have often used this line of reasoning to justify ignoring the vocal minority in favor of their perceptions of the wishes of the silent majority. This usually results in a defense of the "technical" solution against all expressed concerns.

The fallacy in this thinking is that the silent majority is not a political reality. All important decisions in this country are made by the vocal minority. This is generally understood and accepted in the political system but has not gained legitimacy for engineers and planners. The assumption that because people are silent they are totally in agreement is false. "In reality,

it is far safer to assume that the silent majority contains just as many diverse opinions as does the active minority, but that the silent majority has chosen not to participate, either because they do not see the issue as having much impact on them, or they do not believe that they can affect the outcome."[9]

Since the community involvement program will inevitably be dealing with a relatively small number of highly motivated and affected individuals, [10] it is important that the evaluation criteria account for this likelihood. The agency's obligation to the broader public can best be served by evaluation criteria that emphasize --

1. Informing as broad a segment of the community as possible of the stake they may have in the issue under study
2. Making it clear how citizens can participate in the study and how their participation will influence the outcome
3. Systematically targeting various publics in the community involvement program to ensure that the active minority is representative -- in terms of values and interests -- of the broader majority[11]

Another measure would be the public perception of the program's receptiveness to the feelings and opinions expressed by the community. Technical professionals often lose touch with feelings. This is a great mistake. "Feelings are a rich source of information about people's values, philosophies (and) their sense of the way things 'ought' to be."[12] Therefore, the representatives of the planning agency need to communicate their commitment to make the program influence decision making. They need to be listening to public concerns and creatively working with the options suggested by the

public. They should not be promoting their ideas or reacting defensively to disagreement.

In addition, the evaluation should consider the program's effectiveness in communicating information and limitations to the public. This primarily involves the ability to translate technical information and regulations into language and graphics that the public can easily understand. It also incorporates a concern not to misrepresent the decision-making authority of the organization. If the program effectively communicates the limitations as well as the possibilities of the community involvement process, it will minimize the chance for unrealistic expectations and disappointment to degrade the credibility of the process.

One final measure for evaluating the effectiveness of the program should be the extent of the agency's response to public input. At each logical step in the planning process a summary of the information provided by the public should be drafted and distributed to all involved groups or individuals. This summary can include the actual comments or concerns, with the agency's response to those concerns. It should also indicate how this information will be considered in the planning or decision-making process and what effect it could have on the study. This exercise has the benefit of telling the public that their concerns have indeed been heard and that their participation can affect the decision-making process. It also serves as a record of the community involvement process, giving the process visibility and credibility.

Community involvement can be a tremendous asset if and only if the agency is willing to embrace the need for public input as a legitimate part of the planning process. It must be approached with an attitude of "openness, responsive-

ness, and a general commitment to the concept and ideals of participation."[13] "The ability to deal with all types of groups and individuals in a constructive, non-defensive fashion, and the ability to establish trust and build credibility with people"[14] are the principal skills required for a successful community involvement program.

It may be helpful in summarizing this chapter to set forth a list of basic principles for community involvement. These principles should serve as guidelines to judge the agency's intentions in community involvement.

These principles include:

1. Community involvement must be considered alongside technical analysis. It cannot substitute for technical analysis nor can it be effective without the support of technical input.
2. The techniques selected for involving the public must serve the purpose of the program. They should not be perfunctory to the decision-making process.
3. The program must maintain a high level of visibility in order to achieve public credibility in the decision-making process.
4. The professional staff should not use technical expertise to defend the agency's proposal or to reject the public's suggestions. The professionals should develop a creative approach to incorporating the ideas of the public within the technical constraints of the system.
5. The program staff should accept the vocal minority as a legitimate representation of the concerns of the general public.
6. The program staff should be receptive to the expressed feelings of the public.

7. The program must include the translation of technical information and limitations into clearly understandable language.

8. The program should include distribution of a summary of the information collected from the community involvement process. This should consist of both the actual information or expressed concerns and an explanation of how this information will affect the planning process.

9. The program must visibly demonstrate consideration or (preferably) use of public input so as to validate the effort.

CHAPTER III

VALUE CLARIFICATION

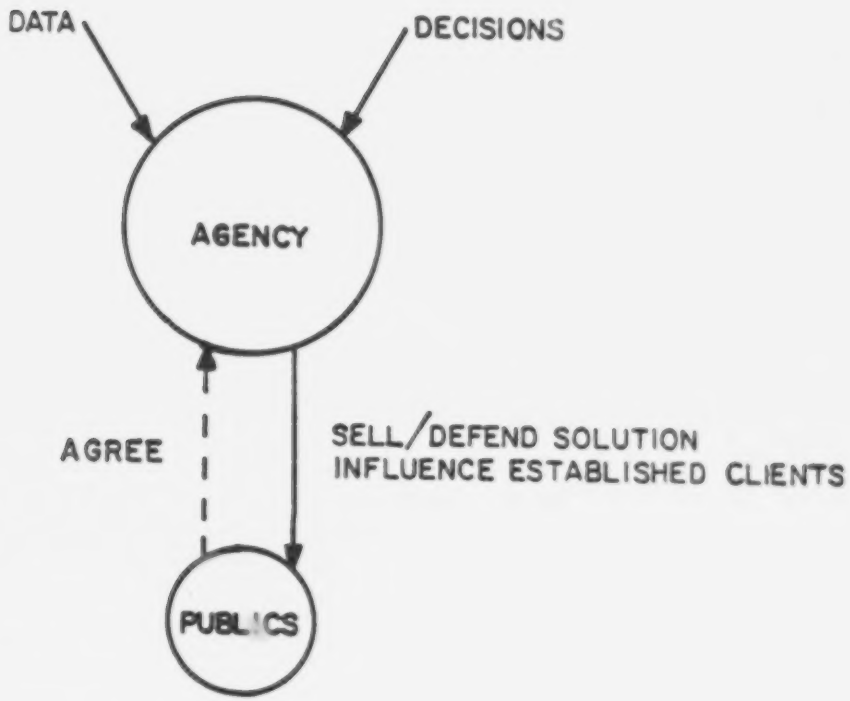
The success of a community involvement program is highly dependent on the perceptions the agency and publics have of one another. Stereotypical attitudes and preconceived notions detract from the program's effectiveness. Without the exchange of information, communication can degenerate into hostile interaction. Significant skills are required to overcome the barriers to communication resulting from negative perceptions about the program. This chapter will discuss the attitudes and communication skills that the agency can bring to the community involvement program. A conceptual model for enhancing the potential for productive interaction and minimizing the destructiveness of controversial issues will be presented. This will be followed by several communication-building concepts that can assist the agency staff in implementing the model.

Traditionally, public hearings have been power struggles. The agency has developed solutions based on technical analysis. After the alternatives were studied and a decision was made, the public hearing was used to inform the public about the decision. Throughout the process, the public opinion was rarely sought or considered in the planning; the public hearing was usually just one more step that the agency was legally required to take in order to obtain funding approval.

Figure 3 shows a conceptual model of the traditional community involvement program. The agency, holding all of the data and decision-making power, developed a solution and attempted to "sell" it to the public. If the public did not agree, the agency justified its solution with a factual defense of the

FIGURE 3

TRADITIONAL POWER MODEL



technical analysis. They used the influence of established client relationships with selected interest groups to overpower the weaker, less-organized public concerns. By their attitudes, the agency created a win-lose situation that polarized the agency and the public. As a result the public felt helpless and frustrated.

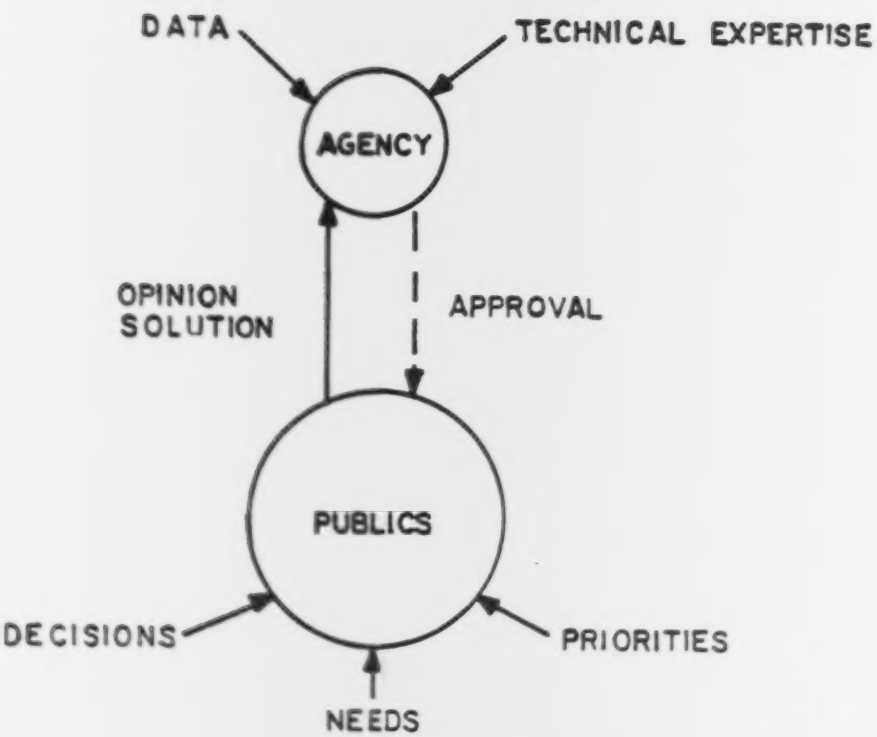
This approach yielded considerable problems during implementation. The residual feelings of being overpowered by the agency produced coalitions of diverse special interest groups for the purpose of mounting a concerted effort against the agency. By excluding the impacted groups and the consideration of other values from the decision-making process, the agency set up two sides for a conflict that occasionally crushed the project in the long run. The frustrated publics waited for any opportunity to arise, either with the subject project or the next one the agency recommended, to attack the agency. The real merits of the project became distorted by the feelings generated by the approach.

For an agency that has actively pursued community involvement from the traditional power model perspective, attempting to recognize its fault and reform its program can be difficult. One tendency is to permit the public to make all of the decisions. If the agency has a particularly bad reputation, the public may see this as its opportunity for vengeance. The agency, feeling this pressure, may totally divorce itself from the community involvement process, letting the public make the decision.

As Figure 4 depicts, this process is equally flawed. The agency has the data and technical expertise required to analyze feasible or viable solutions. The publics are asked to rely on their understandings, usually as laymen, of

FIGURE 4

PUBLIC DECISION MODEL



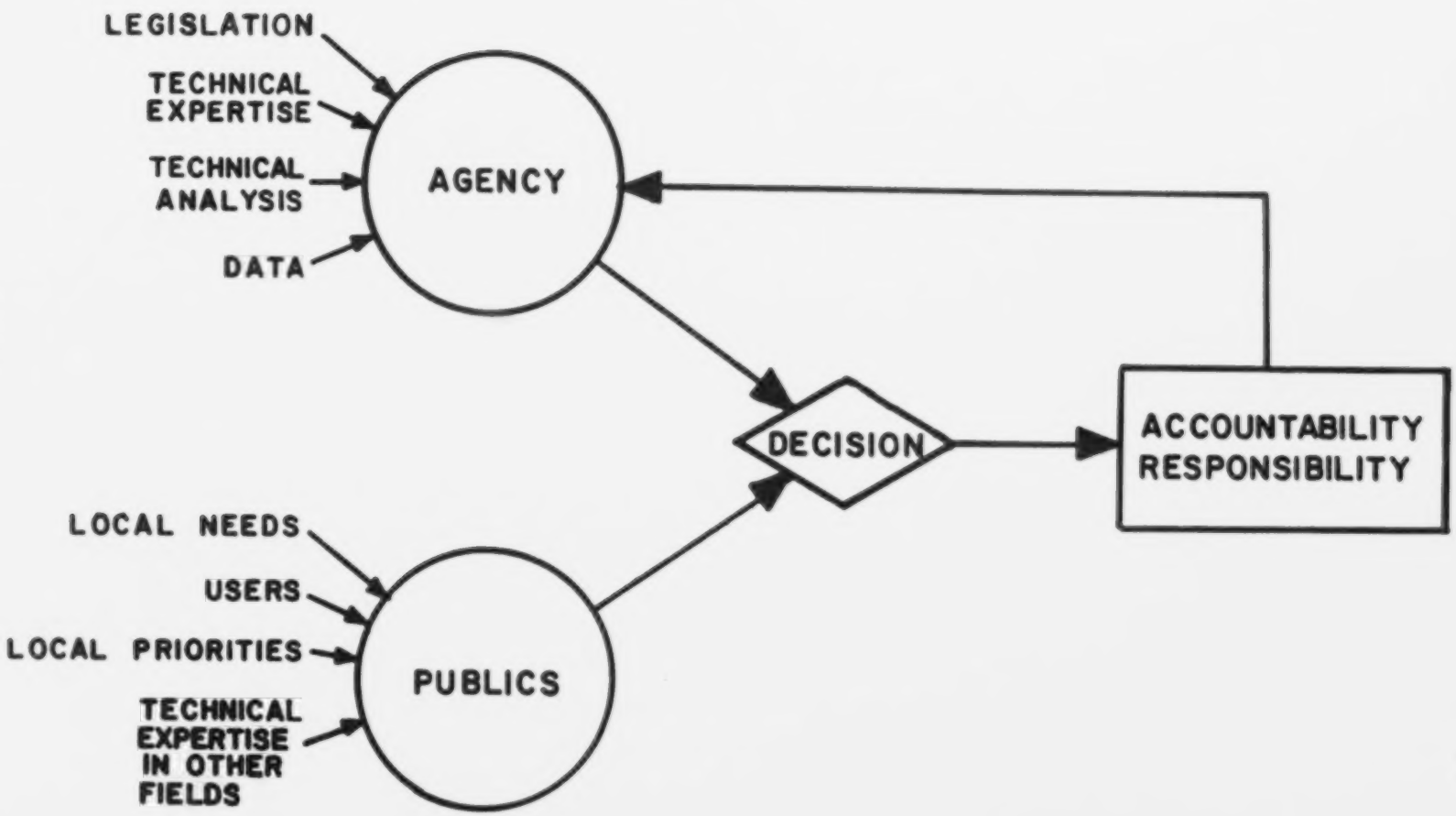
needs and priorities to formulate a solution that best serves their purposes. The agency must then be willing to accept the accountability and responsibility for the solution created by the public. If the decision is unrealistic, the agency may reject the solution. The publics then sense that the agency does not value their input. The agency will likely turn back to a traditional power model suggesting a counter-solution and defending it against the decision made by the public.

The failure of the traditional power model and the public decision model in developing a healthy working relationship between the agency and the public suggests that the natural tendencies of the agency must be consciously controlled. The solution is to find a mechanism that combines the assets of both extremes and avoids the pitfalls of allocating power. The model that is recommended here can be called the team-building model and is based on management-by-objective principles used by business organizations.

The team-building model (Figure 5) recognizes the fact that both the agency and the public have information, expertise, and authority that will influence the decision. It brings these resources together in a process-oriented program that assigns equal power to all participants and encourages the growth of communication through a joint task of mutual decision-making. Each member brings resources to a process that demonstrates the mutual benefit of working together and creates a sense of ownership or a commitment to participate in the planning process. Additionally, the process has the benefit of community leadership which has a greater awareness of the technical consideration. These leaders become the critical support structure for the implementation of the plan. Since they shared in its creation, they have a vested interest to see that the plan is carried out.

FIGURE 5

TEAM-BUILDING MODEL



The agency, however, does not relinquish any of its responsibility to produce a technically feasible plan. It cannot use public involvement as an excuse or as a substitute for quality technical analysis. Compared to the traditional power model, the planning process will be more costly and time consuming. It has, however, the likelihood of producing a solution that is more easily implemented. In balance, the total time and cost can possibly be less and the public's sense of confidence in the solution will be greatly enhanced.

To make a team-building model work, the integrity of the agency must be clear to the public. The public needs to see in the agency's attitudes, actions, and responses the sincere intent to listen to public concerns and to work with those concerns toward an acceptable solution. There are many different techniques for involving the public. Some of these are presented in Chapter V.

There are also several communication skills which are common to all involvement techniques. The remainder of this chapter will examine some of the verbal and non-verbal communication skills that can assist the agency in demonstrating the integrity required by the team-building model. These skills form the basic foundation for any successful community involvement program.

Many of the non-verbal communication skills are fairly obvious once a concept of two-way communication is embraced. The public's impressions about the process begin with arrangements for the meeting or involvement mechanism. For example, the convenience of the meeting time and place, the "feelings" associated with the location, and the pre-meeting publicity techniques have important effects on the public's attitudes about the program. As in many other considerations, it is helpful to examine the meeting arrangements from the point of view of the

publics they hope to include. Will they feel welcomed or wanted? Will the arrangements help or hinder openness in communication?

After a citizen or a group feels welcomed to participate and takes the initiative toward involvement, the next checkpoint in their opinion of the process is the meeting environment. This includes the seating arrangements, the staging of the interaction, the agenda, the publication and information displays, the lighting, the sense of formality in the dress or attitudes of the staff or attendants, the provisions for refreshments or casual conversation, and the size and familiarity of the crowd. In general, the more people can see each other and feel included with the agency staff in an environment that encourages dialogue, the greater the likelihood of productive involvement. If the setting is cold and formal, and power and authority focus on the agency, non-involvement or negative involvement is likely to occur.

It is also important to realize that a large group demands less involvement from each individual. As a rule, smaller groups are better for dialogue. In a large meeting this may require breaking the group down into small groups of six to nine people so that more information can be discussed in less time.

A major component in the overall effectiveness of the meeting is the leadership style of the facilitator.[15] If a meeting is run in a highly rigid, authoritarian manner, the public will react negatively. Those attending will try to break down the power of the agency with disorderly behavior. On the other hand, they are able to participate when they feel they are being consulted and when they believe in the utility of their input. When participants consider the meeting to belong to them, they are more willing to observe the ground rules and even assist the meeting leader in maintaining order.[16]

It is also important to demonstrate visually that the agency is hearing the public input. Flip charts, wall posters, overhead projectors, tape recorders, or stenographers attest to the fact that the agency is accurately recording public comments. They may also serve as summary information that the public can review during or after the meeting. It is often beneficial to have the meeting leader conclude the meeting with an overview of the recorded information and an explanation about how this information will be used and made available to the public.

Good verbal communication skills are essential for a successful community involvement program. All of the nonverbal impressions of openness can be lost by insensitive interpersonal communication. The majority of participants in the planning process feel they have a problem. Thus, it is critical that the personnel who represent the agency are able to relate to what might be a crisis situation in some person's life.

With this in mind, it is helpful to select members for the community involvement staff who have a high level of self-esteem, a high tolerance of ambiguity, an openness to new ideas, an acceptance of others, and a sensitivity in risky situations.[17] These agency representatives need to feel confident enough to open themselves up to angry, frustrated, and sometimes violent reactions, and to avoid becoming personally threatened or defensive. They must be able to draw out the substance of the person's concerns regardless of how ambiguous or radically different the idea is in comparison to the rational analysis of the agency. They must communicate acceptance of the person and his (or her) idea, so that he feels encouraged to communicate more information to the agency.

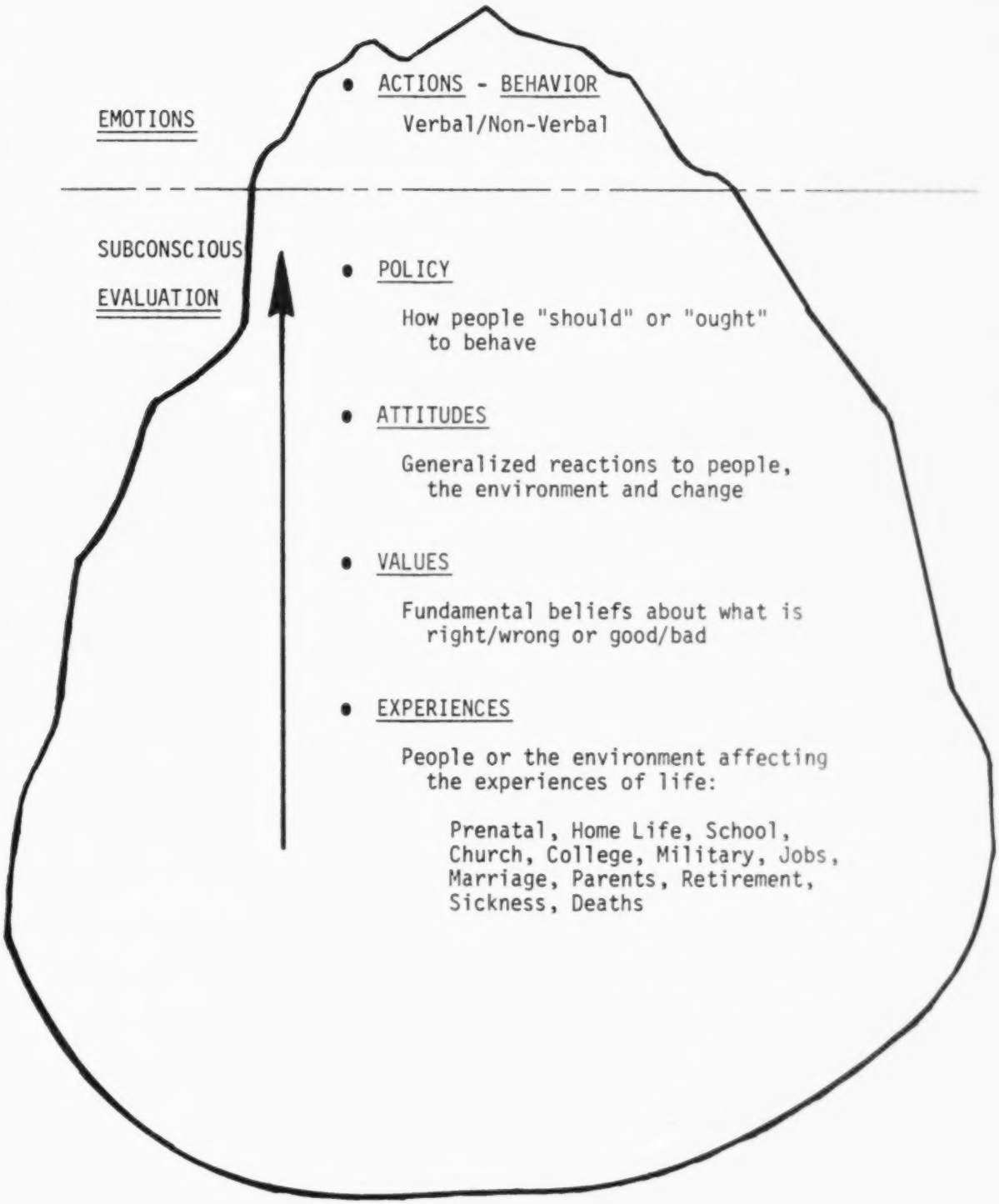
People react to new situations on an emotional level. These reactions may take the form of verbal or nonverbal behavior. A person might make judgments about other people, speak with value-laden language, predict dire consequences of the action, or quote a venerable source as justification for his concern.[18] On the other hand, the person may make insulting gestures, deface displays, or simply storm out of the room. These are all emotional reactions to a conflict in the basic values that form the stability of a person's life. Figure 6 shows a diagram of the development of a person's emotional behavior. One goal of community involvement is to probe an emotional reaction to find the fundamental beliefs or values behind it. By clarifying the values that create a positive good for that person, the agency is able to consider them in analyzing what the action could produce to gain his acceptance.

Briefly, the diagram shows how values are influenced by environmental and personal experience. Values become the criteria by which attitudes about people, the environment, or change are formed. The attitudes are formulated into policy statements about how people "should" or "ought to" behave. Some of these policy statements have been translated into laws, but, for the most part, they are unwritten rules or norms about personal or group behavior.

All of the conceptual development involves considerable evaluation and reevaluation of the experiences of a person's life. It tends, however, to be primarily subconscious. The outward expression of most of these ideas is seen in an emotional reaction to exemplary or conflicting behavior. By listening for key words and phrases, it is possible to extract the basic values from the irrational statements. This is very important if the agency wishes to find facts in a highly controversial issue.

FIGURE 6

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT


EMOTIONS
• ACTIONS - BEHAVIOR
Verbal/Non-Verbal
SUBCONSCIOUS
EVALUATION
• POLICY
How people "should" or "ought" to behave
• ATTITUDES
Generalized reactions to people, the environment and change
• VALUES
Fundamental beliefs about what is right/wrong or good/bad
• EXPERIENCES
People or the environment affecting the experiences of life:
Prenatal, Home Life, School, Church, College, Military, Jobs, Marriage, Parents, Retirement, Sickness, Deaths

The representatives of the agency can enhance the communication of values by using various verbal skills. These skills recognize the fact that problem feelings require a discharge of accumulated energy. The person begins to discharge energy by presenting a problem, most often indirectly in the form of a probing question. He may not want an answer to the question, but only to test the environment with an opinion. If no answer or defensive response emerges, the person may expand on the original statement. But if he does not continue, the representative may need to draw out his direct feelings by paraphrasing the question as a feeling statement (for example, "You are frustrated about...", or "You are angry with..."). The person should be allowed or encouraged to express all the feelings surrounding the real problem. This may require occasional summarizing of the information to keep the person on the subject.[19]

The key, however, is not to answer questions before the person has finished expressing the emotions. By actively listening to him, the representative has gathered more data, heard real issues, given acceptance to the person, and begun to build a relationship of trust. There was no assumption, speculation, analysis, or judgment made of the person's feelings.[20]

If a more discussion-oriented format is used, the representative needs to show an interest in a person's idea without questioning its validity. This can be done by expressing a personal opinion in a constructive manner. The objective is to match the inside feelings with the reasons for those feelings and express them both as a personal statement of ownership (for example, "I am hurt by your accusation that...", or "I am disappointed with..."). This avoids the misunderstandings that are created when the representative gives the solution without expressing the problem; becomes judgmental or sarcastic; or questions the

person's statement directly. These responses suggest that the representative has no intention of listening to anyone but himself.[21]

There are other times, as when considerable controversy creates disorders, that assertiveness skills are needed. Assertiveness is different from aggressiveness in its regard for the rights of the other person. Aggressive behavior ignores the dialogue and seeks to force its own way. Assertive behavior firmly states its right to disagree without denying the other person's opinion. It must be preceded by actively listening to the problem. If the issues are understood and communication has degenerated to disruptive behavior, the leader needs to take control of the situation. This might be done in several ways, many of which can be counterproductive if poorly performed, however.

One technique is to introduce mutual problem solving. The leader expresses a personal feeling about what is happening and suggests a problem that makes the other participants aware of the consequences of allowing this behavior to continue.[22] This is asking the participants if they feel as disrupted by the behavior as the leader does. By pointing out the ground rules and asking for the consensus of the group, the leader avoids making the mistake of defensively interrupting what may be totally acceptable to the other participants.

Another response could be to "play" or have fun with the disruptor's statements in such a way as to calm his emotions.[23] This technique requires great skill and a good reputation for humor. Basically, it involves a joke that breaks the tension but does not poke fun at the person. A skillful leader may be able to make the agency or the action the focus of the humor. This will help the person feel included in the laughter and release the emotional energy. It is generally necessary to invite the person who was interrupted to continue the

discussion. If the laughter releases the emotional energy, the person is likely to terminate the discussion rather quickly.

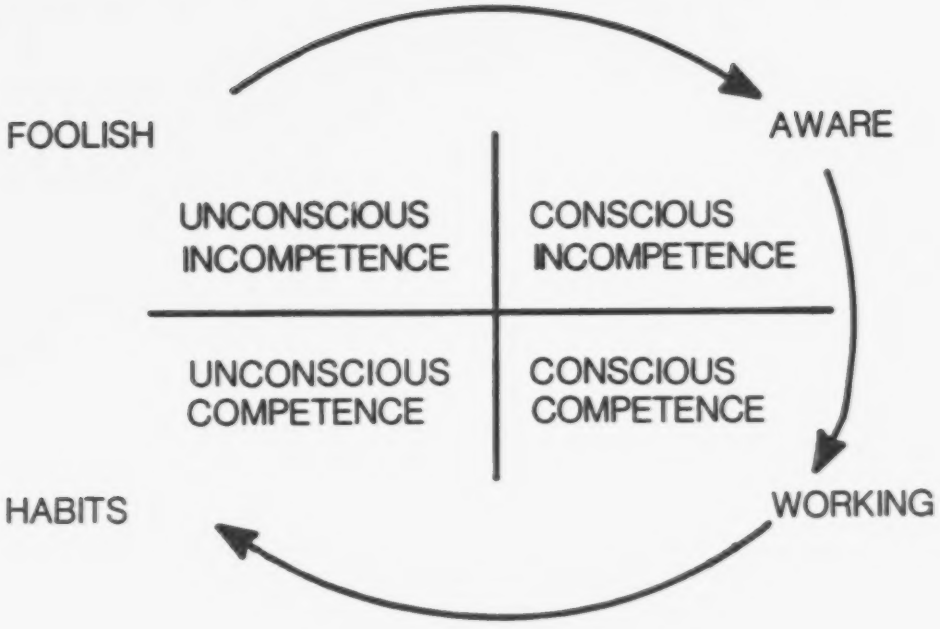
Some techniques are acceptable in extremely difficult situations, but become manipulative and rather hurtful in less critical moments. One technique involves repeating or parroting everything the person says.[24] This must not, however, be done sarcastically. When it is done properly, it lets the person hear what has been said and interrupts the flow of emotions. After many repetitions the person is frustrated by an inability to keep a clear chain of thought.

One final technique involves fogging the issue by constantly agreeing with the disruptive statements.[25] This is not a good practice and should only be used in rare situations. The fact that the "enemy" is agreeing with everything that is burdening the person removes the purpose of expressing the feelings. The more enthusiastically the listener responds to the ideas, the more comfortable and relaxed the speaker becomes. To dishonestly agree with a person may, however, build distrust in the agency's credibility. This technique should, therefore, be reserved for responses to personal insults or other irrelevant kinds of feelings that will not affect the credibility of the program.

When used by trained personnel, the techniques described above are very helpful in obtaining useful information from the community involvement program. Proficiency in these skills can be gained with practice. However, to use them incompetently can be extremely dangerous. As Figure 7 depicts, the process of moving from poor interpersonal skills to effective communication involves working with the techniques until they become second nature. The descriptions in this chapter can only help to build an awareness. They cannot substitute for the quick-thinking response that a heated public meeting so often requires.

FIGURE 7

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



This chapter has suggested a team-building model for productively involving the public in transportation planning. It has also discussed the verbal and non-verbal communication elements which may be needed to encourage healthy interaction. The recognition of emotions and the care that is required in turning emotional energy into meaningful information are an important concept. Clarifying the values of the agency and drawing out the values of the public are two necessary parts of the community involvement process.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There is often considerable fear that the community involvement program will have a negative impact on the planning process. These fears suggest harmful effects such as paralysis, lengthy delays, policy incrementalism and disjointedness, excessive spending, or the impairment of the technical quality of planning. It is likely that community involvement will increase the time and expense of planning. However, effective community involvement in the planning process will ease and probably speed the implementation process.[26] Community involvement can be the key element for successful implementation of transportation improvements.

Once a planning agency's fear of involving the public is overcome through recognition of the usefulness of public input to the overall process, a change in approach is possible. What might have been a minimal effort to inform the public about a project can become an all-out effort to organize public support for the issue. For example, rather than merely publishing a notice in the local newspaper, a recruitment program to encourage involvement of a broad sector of the community may be needed. The reason for this change is the fact that an effective program requires a high degree of public participation. The typical participants tend to be the highly organized interest groups and white, middle class, middle-aged individuals.[27] It often becomes necessary to use special mechanisms to facilitate the participation of less-organized, minority, and low-income groups.[28]

This chapter will focus on the ways in which publics can be identified and elicited. It will also consider the media as one public to which the agency must give special attention. The overall objective of these techniques is to gain as broad a representation from the public as is needed to support the implementation of the action. As a basic principle, the more the agency can mobilize community resources around transportation issues, the better are the chances that the community involvement program will support the planning process.

In order to increase public interest in the issue, the agency needs to explain the concept of citizen participation in several specific ways. The first way is to help the public feel more committed to working with the agency by outlining specific benefits they will realize from their involvement. This should not be done with scare tactics about what might happen if they are not involved; in general it is better to use positive incentives rather than fear. A person who is motivated by fear tends to be less supportive and more defensive than a person who sees some positive benefit resulting from the work.

The next step is to define the public's role in the planning process. This includes specifically stating the type of information that will be provided and the kinds of responses that will be expected. The limitations of the agency's authority should also be communicated. This makes the nature of the time and energy commitments clear to the public from the outset. It also informs the public about what cannot be done.

Finally it is helpful to inform potential participants about the types of review procedures or feedback mechanisms that will be used. This lets the public know how decisions will be made. It will also lay the ground rules for

meetings and other activities, which can be important issues among highly antagonistic interest groups.

After this preliminary information about the program has been given and resolved, the groups are actually invited to participate. People need to know exactly what they are committing themselves to before they express willingness to take part. It is important to make a specific request for their participation; many people need to be asked before they feel welcome to share their thoughts. Requests for both support and criticism are necessary to gain public acceptance of the community involvement program.

Once the concept of how to approach the public is understood, the thinking about what publics to approach can begin. Starting from the premise that "the public" is not a single, homogeneous entity, it is necessary to evaluate possible combinations of individual characteristics "to systematically identify the publics who are most likely to see themselves as affected at each step of the planning or decision-making process."[29] These characteristics include sex, race, employment type, religious affiliation, political preference, residential neighborhood, avocation or recreational interest, educational background, and professional or labor group membership.[30] This exercise helps to group people with similar interests in the planning process. These groups can then be targeted for involvement.

The targeting process is one of identifying groups and the people within the groups that should be specifically solicited for involvement. A public or group of publics should be targeted for each step in the planning process. This implies that the publics who can best assist in the planning and who are most affected can be identified by the agency. Care should be taken to

consider all aspects of the needed input and the credibility of the program in selecting publics. The feelings of the publics that are not specifically targeted are important considerations.

One perspective on targeting an appropriate public for the planning needs is to examine a hierarchy of representatives who have information that is required. The public hierarchy generally consists of --

- elected officials
- other agencies
- leaders of organized interest groups
- members of organized interest groups
- unaffiliated general public[31]

At each stage in the planning process all or a subset of these classifications may be desirable. To avoid the dangers of producing an "elitist" community involvement program, any planning stage that works primarily with the leadership publics should be followed by a more general review by broader publics. Both visibility and political acceptability require that the broader public is given an opportunity to represent their individual interests.[32]

Beyond targeting publics for planning productivity, the concerns of affected publics must be incorporated. People who live in the immediate proximity are directly impacted and will likely want to be represented. People who stand to be economically advantaged or disadvantaged and users of the facilities or services are also generally interested. The neighborhood's social and environmental conditions and values about the way things ought to be are additional factors influencing sensitivity to a proposed action. These people will be

vocal and highly critical. If they are not included to their satisfaction, they will become a significant opposition to the implementation of the plan.

Information about potential groups or individuals who might need to be or want to be included is available from many sources. The obvious publics to include are those who have chosen to participate or who request information. These people may be able to recommend other people or groups who should be invited. Agency staff members or contacts at other agencies are also good sources of information.

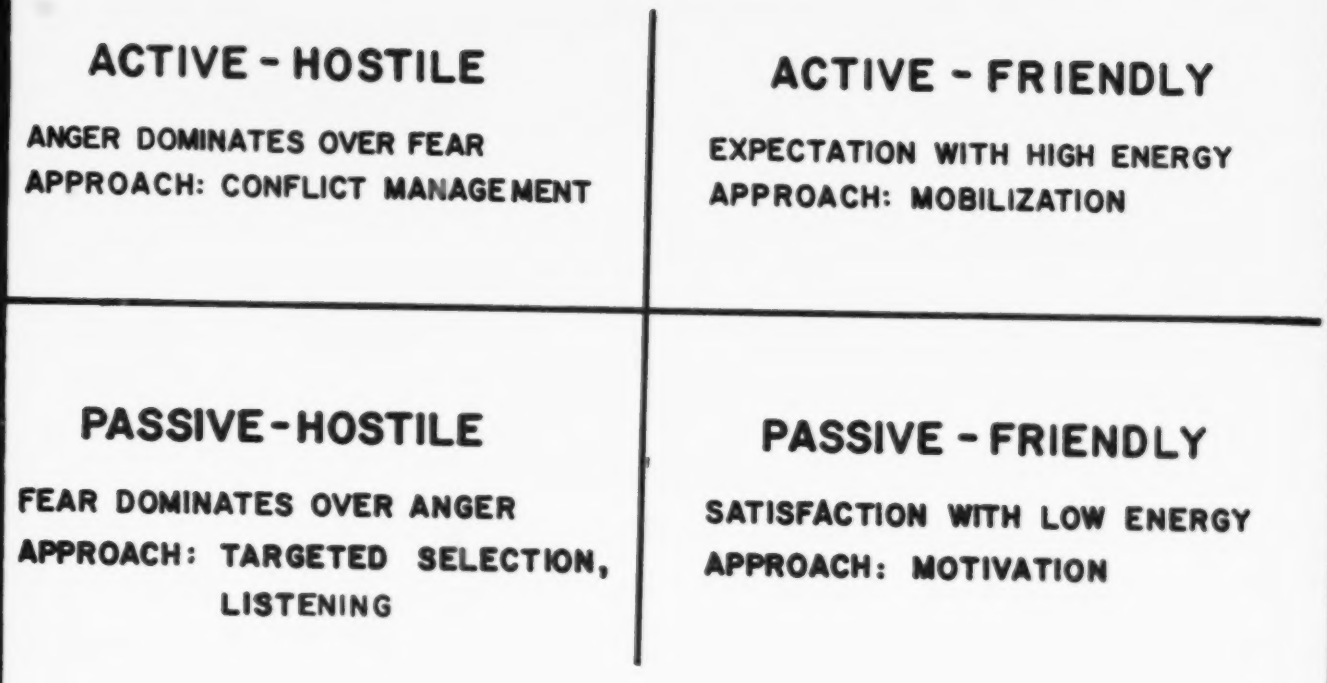
In addition to word-of-mouth methods, many published records or listings are available. These include chamber of commerce lists, city and county directories, and direct mailing lists. There are also historical records of complaints, correspondence files, and newspaper articles to be considered. The principal concern is to anticipate all of the avenues of potential public involvement so that the design of the involvement program can incorporate the need for representation into the exchange of information and the making of decisions.

Recognizing the need to elicit participation and identifying the publics who should be involved are important steps toward organizing community resources. They are not, however, sufficient. While some decisions can be organized around a few established interest groups and powerful leaders, most transportation issues affect a large cross-section of the public and as such require a broader base of public input.

A well-balanced community involvement program will consist of four types of public perspectives. Figure 8 depicts the attitude and behavior dimensions of

FIGURE 8

CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC RESPONSE



these types of publics and the most suitable participation approach for involving them. The passive-hostile, active-friendly, and passive-friendly groups all require some form of agency organization. If these groups are not organized, the value of their participation will be lost in the anger of the active-hostile individuals. In particular, the support from the friendly attitudes might be crushed beneath the weight of the conflict.

It is, therefore, often necessary to organize grass roots or public groups to achieve the program objectives. In many cases a great deal of sensitivity to the community's character is needed in order to communicate effectively. The physical, cultural, and economic character of the community needs to be well understood. The land area, the geography, the housing stock and its condition, the transportation accessibility, other public services, and natural community barriers are important physical dimensions. The population size and density, the heritage and ethnic traditions, the political power or incentives, the communication networks, the work routines, and the industrial patterns are the primary cultural dimensions. The economic dimensions include employment mix, population and employment changes, wage structures, labor supply, and carrying capacity. The interaction of these three dimensions gives a community its distinctive character. This character must be understood in order to recognize the issues that will organize each group.

These insights are particularly important when low-income and minority groups are being organized. The general reluctance to participate by less advantaged groups tends to bias the representativeness of the program. These people often feel insignificant, powerless, and incapable. There are often problems with child care, time or job commitments, and transportation. There may also be a general lack of hope about making their environment a better place to live.

However, there are also more basic reasons for lack of involvement. They may simply not be informed about public meetings because they cannot afford a newspaper or cannot read or speak the language.

Special efforts are needed to facilitate the participation of low-income and minority groups. This might involve special communication techniques such as cultural graphics and language translations. It might also involve simplifying the technical information to highly cultural or group specific issues. On the other hand, the agency may not know how best to communicate with these groups. A lack of experience or personal insight makes planning for a community involvement program with these people very difficult.

The agency can get a better understanding of how to approach an unfamiliar group by asking the people of that group the following questions:

1. What are the natural gathering places?
2. Who are the people in informal leadership positions?
3. What are your informal communication networks?
4. What are the important community issues?
5. Where are your public meetings held?[33]

Answers to these questions can be particularly enlightening when cultural differences are involved. Each group tends to maintain particular aspects of their culture which may not be readily recognized by persons outside the culture but are very important to that individual group. The agency needs to spend considerable time listening to people of different backgrounds. The successful involvement of these publics is dependent on understanding the values that shape their lives.

The media are another public that behaves very similarly to a special-interest group. Many agencies have had a particularly hard time dealing with the media because of previous poor experiences involving the media in the planning process. If the media are given the same rights and attention as recommended for other publics, the media can become a powerful vehicle for community involvement and public support.

Including the media in community involvement is not the same thing as a well-designed public information program. Public information programs are essential in communicating to the public. Pre-meeting publicity informs the community at large about the possibilities for their participation; post-meeting publicity is just as important to inform the community about the results of meetings. Working with reporters before, during, and after meetings is important for obtaining the best results from a public information effort.

The way meetings and issues are described by the media and the details that are presented reflect attitudes of reporters and editors about the agency or the issues.[34] So it is important to build support among the media in order to assure that the community involvement efforts are publicized favorably. This will require considerable effort and care to prepare reporters and editors with necessary information. It is also important to give the media sufficient lead-time to carefully prepare their presentations.

Some media involvement techniques that might be considered include:

- issuing a press release or spot announcement that draws on the need for public involvement
- developing a press kit with a technical summary for press conferences
- visiting members of the press to arrange for feature stories

- arranging for editorial support for the community involvement effort
- eliciting media contributions as a critical component in the planning and information-exchange process -- i.e., television specials or telethons or use of equipment or local broadcasters to improve media presentations
- purchasing display advertising or radio and TV announcements that elicit comments by mail or telephone
- asking community organizations and interest groups to advertise to their own membership and work with the media to reach other interested publics.

The media are legally required to provide public service messages. However, this is not their primary function. Newspapers and radio and television stations are business organizations first; they operate to make a profit. This implies a high degree of competition for coverage and time deadlines that mean the difference between a successful business and bankruptcy. Once the agency understands the needs of the media, a mutually supportive relationship can be established that benefits everyone.

It is important to the agency-media relationship that the agency recognize that the media are manageable but not controllable. Good management involves personal visits to media offices to facilitate mutual cooperation. In addition on-going relationships are developed by making available agency representatives who respond to interviews without defensiveness or evasion of the issues. The agency should also go out of its way to work within media schedules and match information to their formats for more productive and timely press releases. It is important to send the media a "problem" and not a "solution." Problems are what interest people. After-the-fact solutions are not newsworthy unless they

are framed as success stories. Finally, the agency needs to respond to a reporter's effort or lack of effort. This feedback, when provided as constructive criticism or praise to the reporter and editor, will give the reporter incentive to work for the goals of the agency.[35]

In general, taking the time and effort to tailor newsworthy information to the needs of the media can build a relationship of support. Media support can be one of the most powerful tools available to the agency for mobilizing public support and involvement, but the relationship must be developed with the agency's full integrity. Like any other public, the media have a right to their opinions and a right to be involved in critical issues facing the community. The ability to mobilize community resources of all kinds becomes an important ingredient to a successful community involvement program.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

The preliminary background information, general principles, attitudes and skills are perhaps the most important and most frequently overlooked aspects of community involvement. These subjects have been discussed at length. This chapter takes up the actual techniques for involving the public. It is important to emphasize that these techniques must be used within the proper context of a larger perspective about involvement. They should evolve out of the insights described in the first part of this paper.

Notwithstanding, the value of a well-organized and highly functional involvement program can be just as important as the attitudes and skills of the personnel. This chapter will present several organizing principles that can transform good intentions into productive programs. The chapter has been divided into two basic parts. The first part looks at planning principles; the second discusses specific techniques. The specific techniques are further divided in categories of publics and categories of objectives. These are simply for convenience and are in no way meant to limit the applicability of the techniques.

THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

"There is no single approach to community involvement that will be the best for all situations."[36] Habitual use of only a few time-honored techniques may prove to be irrelevant and even harmful in some circumstances. The agency must avoid doing something without thinking about why it should be done. As a

method of developing a program that attempts to answer the "why" questions, a community involvement plan is highly recommended.

The community involvement plan should identify each step or stage in the planning process. This allows the development of compatible techniques for including public input at each stage in the decision-making process. The following structure will fit well into most transportation planning efforts.

1. Identifying issues
2. Formulating alternatives
3. Evaluating alternatives
4. Making decisions[37]

The purpose of community involvement during issue identification is to obtain a clear definition of public needs and concerns. It should also help the agency sense the intensity of public interest.[38] The issues that generate public interest will form the cornerstone upon which the community involvement program is built. This stage of the program will focus primarily on the listening techniques discussed in the section "Information from the Public" presented later in this chapter.

"The formulation of detailed alternatives is normally a consultative process primarily accomplished with other agencies, organized publics, and community leaders."[39] Ideas from a broader public tend to be fragmented or incomplete. The interaction required to translate public ideas into genuine alternatives involves a more extensive discussion than most individuals are willing or able to commit. Some form of advisory or review group may be more productive.

The greatest participation is likely to occur during the evaluation of the alternatives. Several opportunities should be provided prior to any decision or selection of a preferred alternative to encourage public participation.[40] Technical analysis should complement these efforts. It may, therefore, be necessary to divide the participation techniques into several levels of technical understanding so that a full range of technical input and public values can be expressed and discussed.

The decision-making responsibility may be held by a wide variety of publics or a few individuals. The larger issues generally involve considerable public decision making. These decisions may require conflict management or extensive negotiation. Regardless of how the decision is made, a prompt report of the decision should be provided to the broader public. This informs the public about what the decision is, why the alternatives were rejected, and how the final decision was reached.[41]

Each of these steps is then organized into a plan. This plan is outlined in Figure 9. The first two questions ask the agency to define exactly what is to be accomplished and how information is to be exchanged. The third question asks about specific publics who should logically be considered. A more detailed list of questions to achieve this task might include --

- Which publics are capable of providing the necessary information?
- Which publics will be able to understand the information being exchanged?
- How much time and continuity will be required for effective participation?
- Whose participation is required for visibility or political acceptability?[42]

FIGURE 9

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLANS

STAGE OF PLANNING: _____

WHAT IS THE PRODUCT WHICH WILL RESULT FROM THIS PLANNING STAGE?

WHAT INFORMATION EXCHANGE IS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS?

- INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC

- INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC

WITH WHICH LEVELS, TYPES AND SCOPES OF PUBLICS SHOULD INFORMATION BE EXCHANGED?

WHAT SEQUENCE AND TIMING OF TECHNIQUES WILL ULTIMATELY RESULT IN THE DESIRED OUTCOME?

WHAT WILL IT COST AND WHO WILL PAY FOR IT?

The final two questions involve selecting techniques and working out the details of schedule and cost. The techniques that are selected should closely correspond to the objectives of the specific planning step and the information exchange that is desired. There should also be some coordination with other community involvement activities to maximize the mutual benefit of the total program.

INVOLVEMENT OF SPECIFIC PUBLICS

One of the major considerations in selecting involvement techniques is to determine the appropriate level of public involvement for a specific objective. This section discusses general categories of techniques relative to the size or nature of the public that is being targeted. It begins with techniques designed to reach a broader public and proceeds to narrow the focus to small group activities. Since many techniques are used primarily in the context of an objective, a discussion of these techniques will be provided in the section about involvement objectives.

Publicity and Information Distribution

Publicity and information distribution techniques are the best way to reach the broadest possible public. For the most part, these techniques do not involve a dialogue with the public, though they can be designed to include information exchange mechanisms, if needed. The principal uses of these techniques are to inform the public about the action or the decision, to present opportunities for involvement, to stimulate public interest, or to establish credibility for the process.

Many of these techniques involve the cooperation of the media. Developing productive media relationships was discussed in Chapter IV. The importance of a

credible relationship with the media cannot be overemphasized. It is possible, however, to present material to the public using the media even if uncooperative reporting becomes a problem.

At any rate, the technique should always incorporate good media principles. These principles dictate that the first part of the story cover the who, what, when, where, why and how questions before any details about the issue are given. The use of short sentences with simple language is preferred. It is important that a conversational style be used that includes quotes and a present active tense. Wordiness and excessive use of adjectives are not desirable. In general, the audience must feel that the story describes the local situation and that it is done in an honest and accurate way.[43]

The techniques that can be considered for general public information include --

- Legal notices
- Press releases
- Public service messages
- Requesting news coverage
- Assisting in feature stories or columns
- Suggesting editorials or letters to the editor
- Press conferences
- Paid advertisements
- Television or radio appearances
- Displays and exhibits
- Newspaper inserts
- Reports, brochures, and information bulletins
- Documentary movies, videotapes and slide shows
- Sound trucks

- Participatory television
- Mailed notices and handbills[44]

It is important to note that the public is more willing to believe what they hear if the agency displays an open attitude and can present all sides of an issue. Biased information can be just as damaging as rumors or no information at all.[45]

Public Meetings

"The public meeting is by far the most widely used, and publicly accepted, form of community involvement."[46] It is also vastly overused and is too often boring, frustrating, and a waste of time.[47] Notwithstanding, public meetings can be highly effective means of community involvement. They can provide the public an opportunity to hear other people's ideas and opinions and can provide the agency an opportunity to inform the public about the progress of the effort. They also afford visibility to the decision-making process, provided they are carefully integrated into that process. A meeting is generally useless if it is held after decisions have been made, rather than at a time when public comment will have an influence upon the decision.[48] In general a public meeting should not be held unless the agency sincerely wants to know opinions of the public and intends to use them.

Public meeting techniques include --

- Public hearings
- Public mass meetings
- Large group/small group meetings
- Forums
- Panel discussions

- Open meetings
- Workshops
- Working meetings
- Coffee/kitchen meetings
- Briefings

Public hearings are very specialized, formal meetings with a hearing officer and legal requirements for public notice. The public hearing is the minimum legal requirement for citizen participation and the mechanism of recording an official, permanent statement. Public hearings are best used as a formal record of agreement or disagreement that have been previously dealt with informally.[49]

The heavy reliance on public hearings for all purposes of involvement is a major reason why many people view community involvement as ineffective or harmful to the planning process.[50] Because of the expense of a public hearing and the legal requirement that they be held, the hearings should be carefully planned to make them as useful and productive as possible.

Public mass meetings are primarily used "to demonstrate that a great number of people care enough to come to a meeting; they are primarily demonstrations--either of support or opposition."[51] The significance of a large turnout is as an expression of political energy that could be brought to bear on the issue. The benefits of such a meeting are to assist the political and policy-making groups to understand the importance of the issue for a large segment of their constituency.

The large group/small group meeting format is designed to encourage extensive interaction on specific information. It begins with a presentation of the technical background of the study and the issue to the large group. The large group is then broken down into small groups of six to nine participants. A recorder or facilitator is asked to summarize the discussion of each small group for presentation to the large group at the close of the meeting. This method provides everyone with an opportunity to participate intensively and provides a feeling of representation within the large group.[52]

A forum is not well suited for accomplishing a task or negotiating an issue. It is primarily used to describe the study, air certain issues, and hear different viewpoints. If the issues surrounding a decision are not well understood, a forum can serve as the platform for each interest to present their concerns and positions during a well-advertised and media-focused event. Extensive publicity and highly coordinated media coverage require that the meeting be moderated effectively and that the speakers be well organized and media conscious. Technical assistance may be provided to enable the interest groups to present their cases clearly.[53]

A panel discussion is similar to a forum in that the principal purpose is to present issues. The presentation, however, is discussion-oriented with a panel of experts or interests responding to questions from the audience. A typical variant of this meeting format is to select members of the press to conduct the questioning. Their skills in interviewing tend to identify the critical issues more effectively. They can also effectively communicate relevant technical information to the public.[54] Using the media people in such a way also builds trust between the agency and the media.

Open meetings are meetings where work or business is being conducted by an official group in the presence of a public audience. They are generally too formal and guarded to be effective for discussing major issues. The principal purpose, therefore, is to give the public an opportunity to see their representatives in action. Open meetings generally include a specific purpose and agenda and are advertised to all interests. Formal parliamentary procedures are followed so that all decisions are made in proper order. Some audience participation can be included during the meeting as a mechanism for a formal hearing of public sentiment before decisions are made.[55]

Workshops are conducted for a small group of about 25 to 35 people. A special task or goal is discussed among selected individuals for the purpose of exchanging information. The group is asked to make a concerted effort to complete an assignment such as defining alternative actions, evaluating alternatives, or identifying impacts.[56] The emphasis is not to air complaints but to constructively seek solutions.

A working meeting is nothing more than a small group of about 12 representatives focusing on an agenda of work to be accomplished. If public and media attendance is not permitted, a working meeting can facilitate free give-and-take discussion in an informal manner.[57] Identifying areas of agreement and courses of action is the general goal of these meetings. Working meetings are particularly useful as a preface to a more formal open meeting. The business conducted before the public is more productive if the issues have been discussed in private. The formality of the open meeting maintains the visibility required to establish a credible process.

The most informal style of meeting is the coffee/kitchen meeting in a private home with no more than 15 to 20 people. Because the official nature of the representatives is less ominous, the relaxed atmosphere lends itself to frank, person-to-person discussion on issues of concern.[58] Trust relationships can also develop between people who share this type of social experience together.

A briefing is a frequently used technique for informing other people about the work or decisions made by a representative or advisory group. It can involve passing information from a working group to a decision-making group or from a decision-making group to the general public. Informal briefings should be held regularly to keep all parties abreast of the progress of the study. Formal briefings should be used very sparingly. In many cases a simple media release or news conference is much more effective at communicating information to the general public than a briefing meeting. Formal briefings should be used only when critical decisions are being made and public representatives must demonstrate a high degree of accountability for their decision. The effect of a decision maker's telling people face-to-face in his or her own words can, at times, be critical to the public acceptance of a decision.

As the previous paragraphs have indicated, public meetings can be held in many different situations with a wide variety of consequences. In general, the more informal, small-group-style meetings are more productive for exchanging information and resolving conflicts. High-pressure situations and public visibility insist that formal meetings be included. Matching the meeting style and format to the specific need is perhaps the most important consideration. Once the appropriate meeting type is chosen, good communication skills and a well-organized presentation are important. Appendix A presents a list of

organizing questions about public meetings to assist agencies in developing effective meetings.

Advisory Groups

Advisory groups are established groups of interested persons who meet together regularly for a specific task. Such a group consists of about 25 to 35 members who can bring their affected interests and values to bear on the decisions that are being made. Such a group gives the agency the advantage of directly working with knowledgeable leaders and representatives. The group can --

- assure that community goals and needs are addressed
- serve as a forum for the agency to identify issues and alternatives
- provide continuing visibility and credibility to the study process
- help to resolve conflicts between interest groups
- review written material and presentations intended for public consumption
- generate interest, support, and knowledge among the general public about the nature of the study.[59]

It is particularly important to clearly define the limits of the advisory group. First of all, by definition they only advise decision makers; they themselves do not make decisions. This would suggest that voting within the group is rarely desirable. If a consensus cannot be reached, majority and minority reports are more helpful to the decision-making process.[60]

They are also limited in time and task. The longer an advisory group is in existence the more likely it will become unrepresentative of its constituencies. When people work together for a long period of time, they learn how to compromise their full beliefs in order to gain a small portion of their needs. As a result, long-standing groups become more effective at making decisions

because they become less effective at representing the full range of community values that was originally intended. In the same way, a single-task committee that maintains regular communication with its constituencies produces better results for all concerned.[61]

Several types of advisory groups are possible. The basic distinction involves the nature of selecting members. The types of groups include --

- agency-elicited advisory groups
- interest-group-appointed advisory groups
- politically appointed advisory groups
- publicly elected advisory groups
- volunteer advisory groups
- neighborhood advisory groups[62]

When the agency or interest group selects the members of the advisory group, the principal concern is for fully balanced representation. Political appointments or elections do not guarantee that a group is representative, but they do increase the visibility and credibility of the group's advice. Volunteer and neighborhood groups are most biased in their perspective, but they also tend to be most committed to work toward a solution. Neighborhood groups are especially effective if there are other neighborhood groups addressing the same task. By working with various levels of ideas, a hierarchical structure of planning can be developed that is rooted in the neighborhood units but coordinated at a regional level.[63]

INVOLVEMENT FOR SPECIAL OBJECTIVES

As mentioned earlier a major distinction of involvement techniques is made between a specific-public focus and a special-objective focus. This distinc-

tions is, of course, not absolute; many techniques overlap several purposes and publics. A table at the end of this chapter addresses these multiple functions.

Information to the Public

Providing information to the public is a major goal of all community involvement efforts. Newsletters, publicity, and other media events are included in this category. There are, however, several methods of communicating important information to the public that do not depend on media cooperation. For example, many public meetings include presentations which are selective in their content and demonstrative in their approach. These are fairly straightforward means of telling people what the agency wants them to know.

This section will focus on techniques that circumvent the suspicions that some interest groups have of each other or that the publics have about agencies. These techniques focus on indirect educational mechanisms where people voluntarily acquire information from the agency. They include --

- Field offices
- Technical assistance to public groups
- Training programs
- Simulation games and role-playing
- Graffiti

Field offices are established by agency representatives on a temporary basis in a community where the project or issue has the potential for significant impacts. Such an office is typically located in a place of high visibility where the largest number of people will know of its existence. The technique

is designed to encourage drop-in and other informal interaction with the community in a place where exhibits, charts, maps, brochures, and other material are on display. The staff in the office are able to answer questions and solicit opinions from people who otherwise might not communicate with the agency.[64] A house trailer may be particularly useful as a mobile field office for use at county fairs, shopping centers, campuses and other public areas.

Providing technical assistance to public groups and developing training programs are techniques of a specifically educational nature. If a public group asks for the technical assistance or training offered by the agency in order to develop a presentation of that group's special purposes, the educational opportunity for the agency is tremendous. The public group will be listening for specific information that will assist their cause. In the process they hear and understand the broader context of the issue. Once the public group is well grounded in the fundamental concepts, the process may develop into providing them technical assistance for refining the alternatives they wish to suggest. The agency needs to be committed and open to all alternatives in order for analysis and evaluation assistance to be productive.[65]

Training programs are basically a formalized educational process. Generally the public volunteers for training in order to further their own ends. By having a greater awareness of the planning or decision-making process, the content of environmental documents, or the methods of team-building, the productivity of the public involved in the program is greatly enhanced.[66]

By using simulation games and role-playing the agency can inform the public about the "effects of making particular policy choices and decisions and the interrelated nature of various features of an environmental or economic system.

Simulation gaming provides an opportunity for people to try out their positions, and see what the consequences would be and how other groups react to them."[67]

In some cases it is especially effective if group leaders and policy-makers are allowed to change roles and act out the frustrations of the other group. In any case, the games should be fun. They should also be subconsciously educational. A proper blend of the two is important for the method's success.

Graffiti can be used in several contexts. It is especially effective during public meetings as a means for the agency to paraphrase public comments in a way that the public can agree with. It can also be used to allow publics to vent their frustrations for others to see. Well designed graffiti boards which present specific agency perspectives or understandings for public review can be displayed at meetings or in public places. The agency can present assertions or situations on the graffiti board as if they were comments from the general public. The public reaction to those comments become important feedback to the agency.

Information from the Public

One of the most frequently overlooked aspects of community involvement is an opportunity for the public to contribute to the solution. The legally required minimum community involvement program depends on the public hearing for public input. Public hearings invariably take place after a study is completed and the comments made by the public are useful only in approving or rejecting the study.

Public input is often far more helpful than generally anticipated. The information provided by the publics can greatly enhance the attractiveness of a

solution. It can provide realistic estimations of values, priorities, and concerns which can be actively addressed by the study. It can also provide credibility to the process.

Information should, of course, be exchanged during every encounter of the agency with the public. Actively listening to the public is paramount. A good background awareness of the community and a well-developed network of public information sources are also invaluable to the program. By adding some specific information-gathering techniques to the study design, particular issues can be addressed and worked with in a way that constructively builds toward a solution.

The information-gathering techniques that will be discussed in this section are --

- Nominal groups
- Delphis
- Hotlines
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Interviews

A nominal group process is a technique designed to identify issues and set priorities. It involves a relatively large (more than 25 people) group of reasonably representative people. The group is first presented with a background report of the study and the major issues which the project staff has identified. Each individual is then asked to list every issue she or he feels the study should address. Each issue is recorded on a 3 X 5 card and several reasons for its importance are added. At this point, small groups of six to nine people are created. In these groups, each person takes turns presenting and discussing one issue. The issues are listed on large butcher paper for

future reference. After all the issues have been recorded, each person ranks the five most important issues. The rankings are tallied and discussed. Further rankings may follow if refinements in the priorities seem likely. Finally, each group is asked to present their top-priority issues to the total group so that an overall list of issues and a general sense of priorities can be developed for the study.[68]

A Delphi process is intended to obtain a consensus from a group of experts, often about predictions of the future. A few knowledgeable people are first identified by the agency. These people are asked to identify other experts in the field. Those who are most frequently named become the panel of experts for the technique. They are then each contacted by a letter describing the process and the nature of the panel. The letter also explains that the names of the other participants and their responses will be confidential. Each expert answers a questionnaire or responds to a statement about the future. These comments are collected, summarized, and redistributed to the panel. A second set of questions or statements are developed based on the results of the first round. With each redistribution of the results, the process involves the panelists in a discussion of the issues for which there is some disagreement. More interest is generated and higher quality responses are given. The process continues until a consistent picture about the future is developed.[69]

A hotline is an easily remembered telephone number which is advertised as the single number that citizens can call to ask questions or make comments about the study. Because comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as a part of the record of a public hearing, communication skills are very important to the success of this technique. The staff must not be insensitive or defensive to public comments. They should interact with the people and not

simply fill out forms. The hotline should be staffed by people who will take responsibility for finding answers to the questions or relaying comments to the appropriate staff person.[70]

A frequently used and often abused method of data collection is surveys and questionnaires. These techniques can be used to determine public attitudes, values, and perceptions. They can be conducted by mail, phone, individual interviews, or small-group interviews. A survey is a statistical tool for making general statements based on the responses of a small number of randomly selected samples of the larger group. A properly designed survey requires considerable time and expense to develop and evaluate thoroughly. Notwithstanding, surveys are often overused and misdirected. They fail to produce the necessary data and ask far too many "interesting" things about people which will have no bearing on the study itself. A survey should be short, simple, specific, and statistically valid.

Like surveys, interviews need to be well thought out. Unlike surveys, they should be responsive to the person being interviewed. A skilled interviewer will know how to draw from a person the critical components of an issue. By this method, the information that results is the specific value-laden statements that suggest how a person will behave. The interview should revolve around a few leading questions that require a reaction from the person being interviewed. Questions about feelings are particularly effective. Because of the feelings involved, interviews are best conducted face-to-face, though telephone interviews can work well in some cases.

Conflict Management

In projects of any significance, conflicts arise between the agency and the public or among interest groups. Disagreement is natural and should be anticipated in the design of the program. Considerable effort should be expended by the agency to manage or resolve conflicts, though all conflicts do not need to be resolved. The emotional energy of each party can be a productive source of involvement in the program. Conflict management uses this energy to build credibility and support for the decision-making process. It does not force two sides to agree.

This section will discuss methods of dealing with major conflicts. The foundation of all conflict management techniques is, of course, good communication skills. Skilled arbitrators are critical to the management of significant conflicts. The techniques to be discussed in this section include --

- Charrettes
- Samoin circle
- Final offer
- Saving face
- Relationship by objective
- Ten-step process

As a way to manage conflicts, charrettes seek solutions. The principal purpose is to resolve differences between all major interest groups. A charrette attempts to bring together the conflicting interests for a concentrated block of time such as a weekend or a series of nightly meetings. All major publics must be present and agree to work toward a solution in order for the decision to constitute a consensus. The technique is primarily crisis-oriented, with extensive publicity surrounding the decision.[71]

A Samoin circle is a large-group (more than 40 people) method of conflict management between interest groups. It enables the representatives of conflicting viewpoints to express their concerns and discuss the differences that exist, in an orderly manner. The group is arranged in large circles around one central table. At this table are five chairs. The agency representative explains the process to the group and goes to the back of the room to listen. In order for anyone to make a statement or discuss something with someone else, she or he must come to the center table and be seated in one of the five chairs. If the chairs are occupied, the person must wait until someone at the table leaves. If the newcomer wishes to address a specific speaker at the center table, he stands behind the chair of that speaker. This tells the other members of the discussion group what his intentions are. The process generally takes a few minutes to get started but quickly grows. It may become so involving that at the end of the time period the discussion may need to be gradually foreclosed by having the agency representative remove one chair at five-minute intervals from the center table.[72]

The final offer can be used by an agency with administrative accountability. When the decision-making power belongs to the agency and various groups disagree about what should be done, the agency can ask each group to make a final offer. A meeting is held in which the agency actively listens to the current positions of each group and establishes the consequences of an unresolved conflict. Negotiation is permitted up to the deadline established by the agency. At that point it is critical that the agency representative makes a decision or accepts the decision of the conflicting groups. The credibility of the process is based on the time limits established by the agency.[73]

Saving face is a conflict-resolution technique between two decision-making authorities. The third-party facilitator assists each authority in compromising their position while maintaining credibility with their constituency. The third party initiates the process by declaring the problem and the impacts of the problem, and expresses a personal concern for resolving the conflict. A neutral site is selected where both authorities can work together on common goals and desired outcomes. They are then separated and given space and time to consider the compromise that they may be able to make. The mediator visits each of the authorities among their own constituents to support and recognize the importance of the leader's decisions. The authorities meet again to reevaluate their positions and suggest a process for presenting the agreement to the public for review.[74]

One consensus-shaping technique is called relationship by objective. It is appropriate where a potential conflict between two powerful interest groups or decision-making authorities is anticipated at the beginning of the study. In many situations conflicts can be anticipated simply by the existence of long standing controversy about a facility or of distrust between interest groups. If this is the case, the relationship-building technique can be used to identify the positions and desired outcomes of each group at each stage in the process: identifying problems, generating alternative solutions, evaluating solutions, agreeing on a solution, assigning tasks, and implementing the solution. At the start of a new stage, relationship by objective asks each group to generate four lists. If "group A" and "group B" represent these two interest groups, the lists can be framed as follows:

1. According to group A, group B should . . .
2. According to group B, group A should . . .

3. According to group A, group A should . . .
4. According to group B, group B should . . .

The process of role reversal with explicit statements about what should be done helps to clarify the feelings each group has about the other as well as the position they themselves wish to take. At each repetition of the listings, the groups are better able to describe their counterparts' position and incorporate those values into their own position.[75]

As the name depicts, the ten-step process is a sequential method of dealing with conflicts. It depends on a facilitator who can build trust relationships from a neutral position. The purpose of the process should be clear but the actual steps should flow naturally from the facilitating relationship. The ten steps are listed below:

1. Each party provides a written description of the conflict.
2. Each party identifies desired outcomes.
3. The facilitator describes the responses each group might or might not make toward the conflict.
4. The facilitator attempts to reduce the area of conflict by identifying points of agreement.
5. The facilitator assists the groups to identify goals of process and content relative to the conflict.
6. Each party is asked to write down the issues, feelings, and values that created the conflict.
7. A list of motivations for wanting to win the argument are generated.
8. Written agreements are developed to solidify the process.
9. Tasks are assigned to each party and time schedules are developed to regulate future actions.

10. The facilitator monitors compliance and checks for unresolved issues.[76]

Decision Credibility and Relationship Building

The relationship between the agency and the public is an accurate indicator of the effectiveness of the community involvement program. Bad relationships generate bad feelings which are expressed as antagonism toward any effort of the agency. Good relationships add to the productiveness of the involvement effort and the credibility of the decision-making process. The objective of all community involvement efforts should be to complement the conventional planning process with open, responsive, and committed public participation. A few specific techniques that may add to the credibility of the program include --

- Cumulative brochures
- Contests or events
- Presentations or speaking engagements
- Parties
- Ombudsmen
- Employing local citizens
- Hiring advocates

The cumulative brochure is a visible record of a series of public meetings, informational leaflets, workshops, or other activities. At the beginning of the process, a brochure is prepared that describes and discusses the alternative solutions recommended by the agency. At each meeting the public is invited to submit their own alternatives to be included in the brochure. The brochure is then republished with the new information incorporated. Public comments and technical responses are added for each alternative. The dialogue and revision process continues throughout the study. The final document is a visible record of the entire process.[77]

Contests or events, presentations or speaking engagements, and parties are all relatively lighthearted ways of generating a good feeling about the agency. They can be used to stimulate interest and publicity for the agency alone or for the specific project. Essay contests at public schools, photo contests, and public tours can be staged as newsworthy events in most areas. Creating presentations for use in the public schools or providing speakers for local gatherings or civic organizations can also serve to build the integrity of the agency. Parties are a bit more delicate to organize, but if they are focused as celebrations at the opening of new facilities or at groundbreaking ceremonies, they can be quite effective.[78]

Ombudsmen, employing local citizens, and hiring advocates are more extravagant ways of developing credibility. If the money is available and the agency's reputation is very poor, these methods may be useful. They all involve employing a person or group of people to specifically represent the public or a particular interest. These people are assigned to the agency to provide information regarding the public concerns. The variations among the techniques are in the nature or method of selecting these people. The ombudsman is an agency-selected independent investigative officer in charge of monitoring the agency and serving as a liaison between the agency and the public. The employment of local citizens is a project-specific option in which the public suggests a representative citizen to work within the agency to assist in the community involvement effort. An advocate is generally a technically competent professional hired from an outside agency to monitor the work of the agency on behalf of the affected interests.

In all cases the relationship of this person with the agency and the role of this person within the agency are important considerations to be worked out in detail before these techniques can be used.[79]

Table 1 summarizes the community involvement techniques presented in this chapter. The categories of publics and objectives described above have been included. The multiple functions of these techniques and a ranking of their effectiveness in each function are presented. In addition, a relative cost estimate is provided. It should be noted that a skilled organizer can utilize some otherwise expensive techniques by actively encouraging public contributions of time, facilities, or equipment by local businesses or groups. Mutual benefits can generally be suggested that will considerably reduce the direct costs to the agency.

TABLE 1

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

* Possible
** Useful
*** Good
**** Excellent

	SPECIFIC PUBLICS			SPECIAL OBJECTIVES				COST
	PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION	PUBLIC MEETINGS	ADVISORY GROUPS	INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC	INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	DECISION CREDIBILITY AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	
Legal Notices	*			*			*	None
Press Releases	**			**			*	None
Public Service Messages	**			**			*	Low
News Coverage	***			***			***	Low
Feature Stories or Columns	***			***			*	Low
Editorials or Letters to the Editor	*			*	*		**	None
Press Conferences	**			**			*	Low
Paid Advertisements	****			****			**	High
Television or Radio Appearances	**			*			*	Medium
Displays and Exhibits	***			****	*		*	Medium
Newspaper Inserts	****			****	*		*	Medium
Reports, Brochures, and Info. Bulletins	**	***	****	****			***	High
Documentary Movies, Videotapes, and Slide Shows	*	**	***	****			**	High
Sound Trucks	***			*			*	Medium
Participatory Television	***			**	**		***	High
Mailed Notices and Handbills	**	**		*			*	High
Public Hearings		*		*	*		**	High
Public Mass Meetings	*	*			*		***	Medium
Large Group/Small Group Meetings		****	**	***	****	*	***	Medium
Forums	***	**		***	*	**	**	High
Panel Discussions	**	***	**	***	**	*	**	Medium
Open Meetings		*	*	*	*	^	***	Low
Workshops		***	****	***	***	**	*	Medium
Working Meetings			****	***	***	***	*	Low
Coffee/Kitchen Meetings		*	**	*	**	**	***	Low
Briefings	*	**	*	**			***	Low
Agency-Elicited Advisory Groups			****	***	***	**	**	Low
Interest-Group-Appointed Advisory Groups			***	***	***	*	***	Low
Politically Appointed Advisory Groups			**	**	**	**	****	Medium
Publicly Elected Advisory Groups			*	*	**	*	****	Medium
Volunteer Advisory Groups			**	**	**		*	Low
Neighborhood Advisory Groups			****	***	****	**	***	High
Field Offices	***	*		****	****	*	****	High
Technical Assistance to Public Groups			***	***	***	*	***	High
Training Programs			***	***		**	***	High
Simulation Games and Role-Playing			***	**	*	***	**	Medium
Graffitti		**		**	**		*	Low
Nominal Groups		**	***		****		***	Medium
Delphis			***	*	****	**	*	Medium
Hotlines	***			*	***		***	High
Surveys and Questionnaires	**				***		***	High
Interviews	*				**		*	High
Charrettes		**	**	**	*	****	***	High
Samoin Circle		***			***	****	*	Low
Final Offer			*		**	***	*	Low
Saving Face	*			*	*	****	***	Medium
Relationship by Objective			*	**	**	****	**	Medium
Ten-Step Process			*	**	**	***	**	Medium
Cumulative Brochures		**	**	****	*		****	High
Contests or Events	***				**		****	Medium
Presentations or Speaking Engagements		**		**			***	Medium
Parties	*	*	*				**	Medium
Ombudsmen			***	**		**	***	High
Employing Local Citizens		*	**	**	*		**	High
Hiring Advocates			**	**		*	**	High

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The natural tendency of engineering professionals is to completely separate planning from the implementation of the plan. This suggests that implementation is the responsibility of politics and that professional planners must avoid the corruption, idealism, and power struggles of political bureaucracies. Planning is approached from a sequential process that assumes --

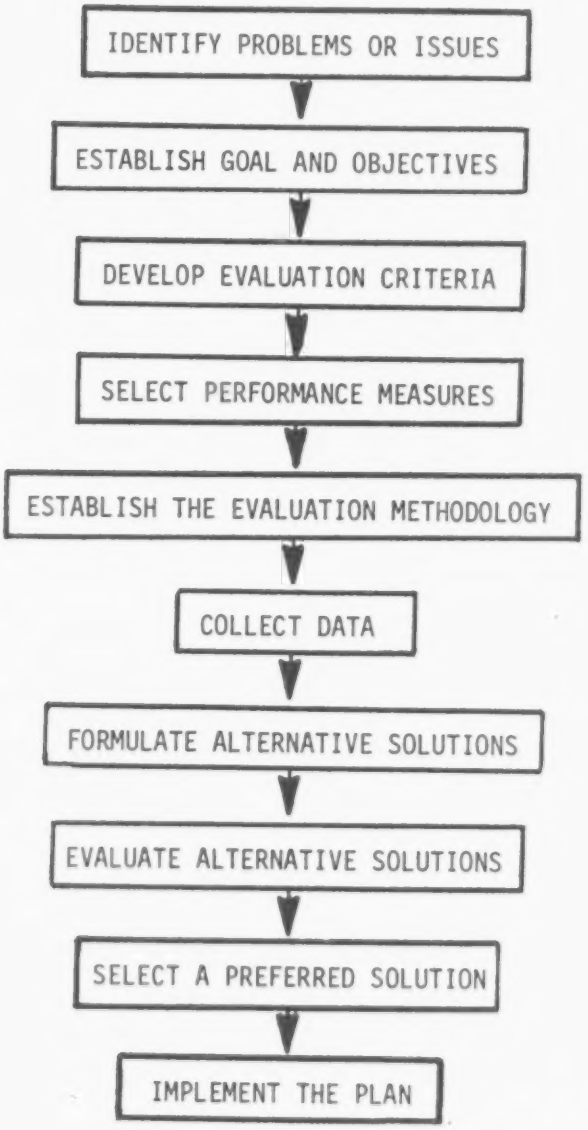
- people are rational
- people will work together
- people have consistent values
- planning is a legitimate process
- a deliberate choice will be made
- the plan ought to be implemented

These assumptions are the basis of the Rational Planning Model shown in Figure 10. This model represents the organizational structure of most planning programs.[80]

The fallacy in this structure is that planning and implementation should not be considered sequential but, rather, simultaneous processes. A plan is the set of initial conditions from which the plan-implementation process begins. Each subsequent actor has different goals and perspectives, and choices are made at all levels of implementation. Implementation takes time, and in the process conditions, assumptions, and perceived problems change, public and financial support erodes, vested interests grow in strength, and new personnel are involved.[81] All this is to say that the process of moving from a planning

FIGURE 10

RATIONAL PLANNING MODEL



agency to an implementing agency requires a great deal of forethought in the planning process. Planners must be committed to work with the plan throughout implementation to guarantee that the technical analysis which generated the plan is not forsaken by the politics of the implementation process.

During the implementation process, numerous special interests are strategically pursuing their own goals. These same interests may have supported the original policy proposal with the expectation of twisting it in the implementation phase to suit purposes never contemplated or desired by those who formed the original coalition. The dominant effect of this is to make the politics appear primarily defensive. A great deal of energy goes into maneuvering to avoid responsibility, scrutiny, and blame. More concern is expressed about what a particular group might lose than with what everyone in general might gain. The outcome of defensive politics is delay, a diversion of energies toward highly specific program goals, and a preoccupation with administrative and political responsibility.[82] "The essential implementation problem is to control and direct the vast profusion of program-related activities carried on by numerous and disparate organizations and individuals so as to achieve program objectives, keep costs down, and reduce delay."[83]

Most organizations and particularly governmental institutions are not well suited for implementing significant policy-planning changes. The natural resistance of organizations to change or to cooperation makes it extremely difficult for any organization to be an effective implementor. Organizations have different goals and standard operating procedures which limit the potential actions any one organization can be expected to achieve. A slow learning process with no incentive toward innovation or change, and a tendency to deal

only with facts and avoid uncertainty eliminate significant decision making. Instead, it creates a mood of willingness to embrace the first acceptable alternative that is proposed.[84]

The political perspective is to evaluate the political results of every action. The absence of coalitions and the presence of fragmented and isolated maneuvers and countermaneuvers create a gaming kind of atmosphere where personal goals are legitimate priorities to pursue. Power trade-offs, bargaining, and the individual stakes or incentives to "win" are the critical components of the process. The result may be --

- diversion of resources, especially money
- deflection of policy goals
- resistance to explicit efforts to control behavior administratively
- dissipation of personal and political energy through delays[85]

The principal implications of the implementation process are that planners should design simple, straightforward programs that require as little management as possible. "Programs predicated on continuing high levels of competence, on expeditious interorganizational coordination, or sophisticated methods for accommodating diversity and heterogeneity are vulnerable."[86] The planner should think seriously about obvious design problems, particularly the financial costs, that will produce stress and strain during the implementation process.[87] The plan should also incorporate incentives or disincentives that consider all interests. The economic principle of Pareto optimality is particularly useful here. The implementation process is not one of maximizing the net benefits to society but one of what economists call satisficing --making everyone somewhat satisfied.[88]

In addition, by considering the characteristics of the potential implementing organizations during the design of the plan, the problems of bureaucratic resistance can be minimized. The analysis of the existing organizations may suggest that the plan include organizational dimensions that will generate a new implementing authority. It is important to note that new authorities can be just as difficult if not more difficult to organize from a political perspective. Notwithstanding, the general characteristics of an organization can be useful in developing realistic expectations for program development. The basic organizational variables include --

- formal rules and hierarchy structures
- informal norms and relationship structures
- manifest and latent organizational goals
- age, size, and complexity rigidness
- types and channels of communication
- degree of centralization
- areas of uncertainty and power
- methods of decision making
- leadership style
- supportive or hostile environment
- client orientation
- line vs. staff functions[89]

In general, implementation requires --

- administrative and financial accountability mechanisms
- willing participation of beneficiaries or clients
- private providers of goods and services
- clearances or permits by public regulating agencies or elected officials
- innovation in the realm of program conception and design

- sources of funds
- trouble-shooters who resolve difficulties and assist in coordinating the more routine activities of the process
- political support that sustains and protects the process[90]

Thinking about the planning process from the implementation point of view suggests that community involvement during planning becomes a useful tool for directing the future implementation of the plan. Much of the community involvement program can lay the groundwork or establish the necessary relationships to expedite the plan's implementation. Other factors can be considered and incorporated into the plan itself. The overall benefits of community involvement combined with an implementation perspective can have significant impacts on the planning process. The planning process may not fit the Rational Planning Model but the practical utility of the plan can be greatly enhanced.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Community involvement needs to be considered as a fundamental element in the transportation planning process. The benefits of involving the public far outweigh the potential costs and delays during planning. Community involvement is a way of developing a plan that realistically reflects the values of the community. In addition, the long-run consequences make community involvement a highly productive and cost-effective means of gaining the financial and political support required to implement the plan.

This document has attempted to present an overview of the community involvement progress. It has outlined thought processes and worksheets that can assist in the development of a community involvement plan. It has described the nature of values and communication skills that determine the basic attitudes of the agency toward public comment. Involving the media and other special interest groups has also been discussed.

These perspectives were presented as preparatory to the specific community involvement techniques outlined in Chapter V. The pitfalls of traditional involvement mechanisms were presented in the context of several alternative approaches. The selection process was discussed in two principal ways. One was the nature of the public. Techniques that are primarily associated with the general public, public meetings, and advisory groups were discussed. The second grouping focused on a specific objective. These objectives include information giving and receiving, conflict management, and decision credibility. The final exhibit in this chapter showed the multiple functions each technique

might be expected to serve and a rough approximation of the relative cost of the technique.

The final chapter suggested that a narrow perspective on planning or even community involvement in planning is not enough. A broader view is needed. The implementation process cannot be ignored or left to the fate of the political arena. Planners need to begin thinking about and incorporating implementation mechanisms into their planning and community involvement efforts. By establishing in advance the necessary structures for implementing the plan the potential for maintaining the plan's integrity is greatly enhanced.

The future of transportation planning will become increasingly dependent on public involvement. Federal regulations and new political power bases are making public values the principal criteria for evaluating transportation projects of all kinds. To recognize and embrace the benefits of community involvement within the total context of planning and implementing transportation improvements is the critical component to the future of effective planning efforts. This paper has demonstrated how the requirement for community involvement can become extremely valuable. It requires proper attitudes and skills, and a highly creative approach to problem solving. These skills are not beyond professional engineers and planners, but they do require additional training. The benefits of learning how to get the most out of community involvement efforts are significant to the effectiveness of contemporary planning.

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

MEETING ORGANIZATION

Purpose: _____

Time: _____ Date: _____ Hours _____

Type: _____ Formal _____ Informal

Format: _____

Sponsorship

Agency? _____
Other Organization? _____

Principal Contact? _____

Accepted? _____

Organizational Plan

Sequence of events developed? _____
Schedule developed? _____
Questions developed? _____
Advisory committee review? _____

Publicity

Methods selected: _____

_____

Preparation ordered? _____
Material prepared? _____
Number of copies: _____
Material placed and/or distributed? _____
Personal follow-up completed? _____

Recording the Proceedings

Methods to be used: _____

_____

Personnel/equipment obtained? _____

Budget: _____ Prepared _____ Reviewed _____ Approved

Identifying Potential Participants

Interests identified and categorized? _____
Organizations and individuals identified? _____

Leader Selection

Who? _____

Invited? _____

Accepted? _____

Speaker Selection

Who? _____

Invited? _____

Accepted? _____

Moderator Selection

How many needed? _____

Who? _____

Invited? _____

Accepted? _____

Orienting Discussion Moderators

Orientation meeting scheduled? _____
Orientation meeting held? _____
Moderators have prepared materials? _____
Final moderator meeting? _____

PRE-MEETING ACTIVITIES

Information Development

Background information to be provided: _____

_____

Graphics identified? _____
Graphics ordered? _____
Graphics received? _____
Written information completed? _____

Distribution Methods: _____

_____

Number of copies: _____
Copies reproduced? _____
Copies distributed? _____

Graphics to be used in oral presentation? _____ Yes _____ No
Graphics identified? _____
Graphics ordered? _____
Display equipment ordered? _____
Graphics received? _____

Graphics to be used in discussion groups? _____ Yes _____ No
Graphics identified? _____
Number of copies? _____
Graphics ordered? _____
Graphics received? _____

Location(s): _____

_____

Central location? _____
Public transportation access? _____
Suitable parking? _____
Safe area? _____
Adequate facilities? _____
Rental fee? _____ No _____ Yes $_____

Does the rental fee include:

Lecterns? _____
Speaker sound system? _____
Blackboards or easels? _____
Projectors? _____
Tape recorders? _____
Chairs? _____
Tables? _____
Meeting room set-up? _____
Meeting room clean-up? _____

Space Requirements

Total number of people expected: _____

General Session

Seating arrangement type: _____
Adequate space? _____

Discussion Session

Number of small groups: _____
Seating arrangement type: _____
Number of people in each group: _____
Adequate space? _____

Equipment Arrangements

For the general session

Lecterns, chairs, tables obtained? _____
Speaker system obtained? _____
Projectors/screens obtained? _____
Space for wall displays? _____
Registration table/space? _____
Personnel for registration? _____
Name tags obtained? _____
Room arrangements made? _____
Audio/visual equipment set up? _____
Audio/visual equipment tested? _____
Ventilation/heating adequate? _____

For discussion sessions

Number of easels/blackboards: _____
Easels/blackboards obtained? _____
Easels/blackboards delivered? _____
Newsprint for easels obtained? _____
Supplies (pencils/paper/chalk/ erasers/felt tip pens/ masking tape/thumb tacks) obtained? _____
Room arrangements made? _____
Ventilation/heating adequate? _____

Meeting Clean-up

Facilities restored and cleaned? _____
Equipment returned? _____

Food Service Requirements

Will refreshments be provided?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Will a meal be provided?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Adequate facilities?	_____	
Adequate space?	_____	
Chairs, tables, and garbage cans provided?	_____	
Plates, cups, and utensils obtained?	_____	
Food obtained?	_____	
Clean-up arranged?	_____	

POST-MEETING ACTIVITIES

Reporting to the Decision-making Body

The body(s): _____

_____

_____

Reporting format: _____

Report made? _____

Reporting to the Public

Methods used: _____

_____

_____

Report prepared? _____
Number of copies required: _____
Copies reproduced? _____
Reporting completed? _____

Meeting Evaluation

Methods used: _____

_____

_____

Evaluation completed? _____
Recommendations made? _____
Recommendations accepted? _____

References

1 U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Community Involvement Manual (May 1979), p. 4. (Hereafter cited as CIM.)

2 CIM, p. 2.

3 CIM, p. 6.

4 Seminar Notes from William A. Wiedman, Jr., "Community Involvement In Aviation Decisionmaking," April 7-10, 1981. (Hereafter cited as NOTES.)

5 CIM, p. 6.

6 CIM, p. 6.

7 CIM, p. 6.

8 CIM, p. 6.

9 CIM, p. 29.

10 CIM, p. 30.

11 CIM, p. 30.

12 CIM, p. 17.

13 Julie H. Hoover and Alan A. Altschuler, Involving Citizens In Metropolitan Regional Transportation Planning, prepared for the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (1977), p. 9. (Hereafter cited as H & A.)

14 H & A, p. 12.

15 CIM, p. 43.

16 CIM, p. 43.

17 NOTES.

18 NOTES.

19 NOTES.

20 NOTES.

21 NOTES.

22 NOTES.

23 NOTES.

24 NOTES.

25 NOTES.

26 H & A, p. 113.

27 H & A, p. 13.

28 H & A, p. 12.

29 CIM, p. 30.

30 CIM, p. 28.

31 NOTES

32 CIM, p. 34.

33 NOTES.

34 CIM, p. 57.

35 NOTES.

36 CIM, p. 19.

37 CIM, p. 20.

38 CIM, p. 20.

39 CIM, p. 20.

40 CIM, p. 20.

41 CIM, p. 20.

42 CIM, p. 24.

43 CIM, p. 60.

44 Institute For Participatory Planning, Citizen Participation Handbook (Laramie, Wyoming, 1978), V-7, V-8. (Hereafter cited as CPH.)

45 CPH, V-8.

46 CIM, p. 36.

47 CIM, p. 36. CPH, V-1.

48 CIM, p. 36.

49 CPH, V-3, V-4.

50 CIM, p. 36. CPH, V-3.

51 CPH, V-3.

52 CIM, p. 37.

53 CPH, V-3.

54 CIM, p. 37.

55 CPH, V-2.

56 CIM, p. 38.

57 CPH, V-2.

58 CIM, p. 38.

59 CIM, p. 49.

60 CIM, p. 50, 55. CPH, V-5.

61 CIM, p. 51.

62 CIM, p. 52.

63 H & A, p. 15.

64 CIM, p. 65. CPH, V-16.

65 CIM, p. 79.

66 CIM, p. 80.

67 CIM, p. 78.

68 CPH, V-6.

69 CPH, V-31. CIM, p. 76.

70 CIM, p. 66.

71 CIM, p. 57.

72 NOTES.

73 NOTES.

74 NOTES.

75 NOTES.

76 NOTES.

77 CIM, p. 73.

78 CIM, p. 74. NOTES.

79 CPH, V-14, V-24, V-26.

80 NOTES.

81 NOTES.

82 Eugene Bardach, The Implementation Game: What Happens After A Bill Becomes A Law (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1977), p. 9, 37, 38, 42. (Hereafter cited as Bardach.)

83 Bardach, p. 250.

84 NOTES.

85 Bardach, p. 43, 66.

86 Bardach, p. 253.

87 Bardach, p. 261-262.

88 NOTES.

89 NOTES.

90 Bardach, p. 36.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1985—461-816/20133

NOTICE
This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The United States Government assumes no liability for its contents or use thereof.

The United States Government does not endorse manufacturers or products. Trade names appear in the document only because they are essential to the content of the report.

This report is being distributed through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Technology Sharing Program.

DOT-I-85-32